

AUGUST 1913

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



What
will
people
say?

and
thing
of
American Society by
Robert Hughes
begins in
this issue

Serial Story by H.G. Wells

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLACC

In the Summer Time

It is well to remember that in going from home, changed conditions are temporarily experienced, which often act unpleasantly upon the skin.

The best safeguard against such skin troubles is the frequent use of

Pears' Soap

which protects the skin by its soft, pleasant, emollient action, and at the same time, insures the fullest beauty of complexion of which the skin is capable.

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Character

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EVERY once in a while some man bobs up who is the double of a celebrity. Frequently he aids the likeness by imitating the other in his dress, haircut, mannerisms, etc. He joyously accepts the homage of the populace — which pleases both populace and himself. But you'll notice that despite all his imitative endeavors he never acts as substitute for the original when it comes to doing the celebrity's *work*. He may be a perfectly good shell, but the kernel is not there—he hasn't the stuff *in* him that makes the celebrity a celebrity.

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(of "Saturday
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among 17
great story
writers, will
be pleased
to meet you
in the next
issue of

The Red Book Magazine

R. S. V. P.

On August 23rd your Newsdealer
RED BOOK containing these

Cobb

IRVIN S. COBB—Humorist, Adventure Writer, Tragedy Writer, Travel Writer—the "Star man" of the Saturday Evening Post—begins his *first* series of stories in any monthly magazine in the September Red Book. We think "The Broken Shoe-lace" is even better than any one of his wonderful "Judge Priest" stories. And they, in book form, have made a "best seller," while a play based on the lovable old Judge is to be the big production of the new theatrical season.

Hughes

RUPERT HUGHES—The Greatest American Novel by the Greatest American Writer. The title, "What Will People Say?" tells just what it is, the creed of the society people of New York. Mr. Hughes says of the glittering metropolitan women: "For each of these women some man has paid. What do the women give in return? What do they pay?" Yes, the title tells what the story is, but not how it is written. No one can do that because no one can write with the strength, the reality and the charm that Mr. Hughes does. Don't miss "What Will People Say?"

Wells

H. G. WELLS—The biggest man in England. His novels sell in every country where the English language is spoken and, where it isn't, they translate them. "The Passionate Friends" is his best. It's the story of a father's life written for his son so that the son "may not waste himself so much" as the father did—The story is vital, searching and with a haunting sweetness that draws one on as it did Howitt, the artist, till he made the most wonderful pictures for it he had ever painted.

Shipman

CAROLYN SHIPMAN—Strong stories of the relations and conflicts of men and women—especially of husbands and wives—made this writer a star. Such stories as her recent "The Two Standards." In "The Best Years of Her Life" she presents with a daring force a woman married to a man twice her age.

Raymond

CLIFFORD S. RAYMOND—Wrote "A Change of Beer." We recommend it. Mr. Raymond is the writer who discovered that political grafters are not much different in morals and methods from the rest of humanity. "A Change of Beer" is the first of a set of cross-sections from city life. They will clarify many things you've never understood, especially if you're a woman who has the vote, who wants it, or who wouldn't have it as a gift.

Jones

WALTER JONES—The star writer of tales of small-town and vaudeville folks. His "The Younger Set" in Pembina" will be a talked-of story. We're banking on that prediction. It tells you what makes a girl a "has been" in a town where only two of the fellows own dress suits.

Butler

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER—The author of the famous "Pigs is Pigs" has never created a character who could produce as many laughs to the square inch of reading matter as his Philo Gubb, detective, educated in the art of detecting in twelve mail lessons from the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting. In "Philo Gubb and the Chicken," Philo does a bit of cut-rate shadowing and trailing.

Wonderly

W. CAREY WONDERLY—Is one of the few writers who can deal with the White Light district around Broadway and Forty-second Street without becoming slushy. Even though you've never been within hailing distance of New York, you'll know "A Slice of Broadway" rings true. There's a blonde in the story who is more consistently blonde than any that ever figured in fiction.

THE RED BOOK

will have on sale the All-Star 17 world famous Fiction Writers

PETER B. KYNE—Writes in a window overlooking the Golden Gate. That gets into his stories just as it did in Frank Norris'. Mr. Kyne's first story sold for more than most old writers get. And now—but read "Corncob Kelly's Benefit," it'll get you stronger than a ball game, because the sweetness will cling long after your cheering's done.

Kyne

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD—The busy North of the Hudson Bay trappers, the silent white North of snow and famine, the joyous North of caribou feasts and plenty, and above all, the North of starlight nights and a golden moon, when the wolf-call to hunt moans over the plains—that's Mr. Curwood's country. In the "Kazan Stories," the greatest animal stories ever written, all of this North is brought to you. "The Feud" is a wonderful story of beaver life.

Curwood

IDA M. EVANS—Who sees a story in the life that is about all of us, and writes it so we too are made to see, deals in "Almost Sixteen" with one of the greatest of human problems, the girl who is just beginning to realize her wonderful endowment from Nature—deals with it in a way to put a smile on your lips and a catch in your throat at the same moment.

Evans

FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT—The great sea-yarn writer, who can make you feel the roll of a boat under you and the wet of the sea spray even if you are in Death Valley, Nevada, spins splendidly in "When Hall Was Young." He takes you to the icy seal country of Behring Sea in an old sailing vessel and tells you of the sweaty, pummeling, back-breaking fist-fight a strict officer of the law had up there in the wilds, where all the law was on one lonely gunboat that he gave the slip.

Bechdolt

L. J. BEESTON—"In Bloodstone Onyx" tells of an expert thief, turned honest for the sake of his daughter. Appears an old companion in crime. Beeston excels all his contemporaries in handling a tense situation of that sort.

Beeston

OWEN OLIVER—"Now if some rich old person should just leave me a few thousand dollars—". How often have you heard that expression? "Barbara's Legacy" tells of a girl, engaged to a man older and wealthy, who suddenly finds herself possessed of a snug sum. There is the touch of the master hand in the telling of what happened.

Oliver

ALMA MARTIN ESTABROOK—Is any girl able to cope with a lustful man, when she, herself, is the prize? That is the theme of "Dear Knows," a powerful story by the writer who has made a beauty shop give the Bohemian restaurant a run for its popularity as the background for stories. Mrs. Estabrook's settings are wigs and manicure tools, instead of waiters and red, red wines.

Estabrook

EUGENE P. LYLE, JR.—In the story "That Little Word If," Mr. Lyle presents to you the struggle that confronted a likable young chap when he had to choose between wealth and a rather shiftless father. A queer story, yes; but absorbing.

Lyle

JOHN BARTON OXFORD—Each of us has a "promised Land," a dream of life as we would wish it to be. Here is a story of a couple that attained theirs, a story pulsing with sweetness and gentleness and love of humanity. O. Henry might have been proud to write it. He couldn't have done the job better.

Oxford

MAGAZINE

For September
Price 15 Cents

"The Ball of Fire"

the latest novel by
George Randolph Chester
will begin in the
October issue of
The Red Book Magazine

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

CONTENTS FOR AUGUST, 1913

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TWO GREAT NOVELS IN SERIAL FORM

- WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY ?** **Rupert Hughes** 594
A great combination of writer and artist effected to produce a graphic book of New York life as it really is.
Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

- THE PASSIONATE FRIENDS** **H. G. Wells** 682
A new novel by England's foremost writer.—The story of the love of Stephen Stratton and the Lady Mary Christian.
Illustrated by John Newton Howitt

FIFTEEN "ALL-STAR" SHORT STORIES

- HASSAYAMPA JIM** **Peter B. Kyne** 619
A man from the desert meets a snaky gambler. This is the story of that night, told by the author of "The Three Godfathers."
Illustrated by Douglas Duer

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A young man essays the rôle of protector for a charming girl. The story is worthy of the author of "Managing Raimond."
Illustrated by Will Grefe

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If you saw your husband being drawn away from you, what would you do? What *could* you do?
Illustrated by George Brehm

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The story of the one big moment in the life of a young scamp you'd want to slap in the face.
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The surprising ambition of a mountain of a man who figured big in society for a while.
Illustrated by Grant T. Reyna

TERMS: \$1.50 a year in advance; 15 cents a number. Foreign postage \$1.00 additional. Canadian postage 50c. Subscriptions are received by all newsdealers and booksellers, or may be sent direct to the Publishers. Remittances must be made by Postoffice or Express Money Order, by Registered Letter, or by Postage Stamps of 2-cent denomination, and not by check or draft, because of exchange charges against the latter.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Do not subscribe to THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally, or you may find yourself defrauded. Many complaints are received from people who have paid cash to some swindler, in which event, of course, the subscription never reaches this office.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealer after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated. Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

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Sliced



Convenience

is the order of the day—an extra jar or two of *Swift's Premium Bacon* comes in most handy.

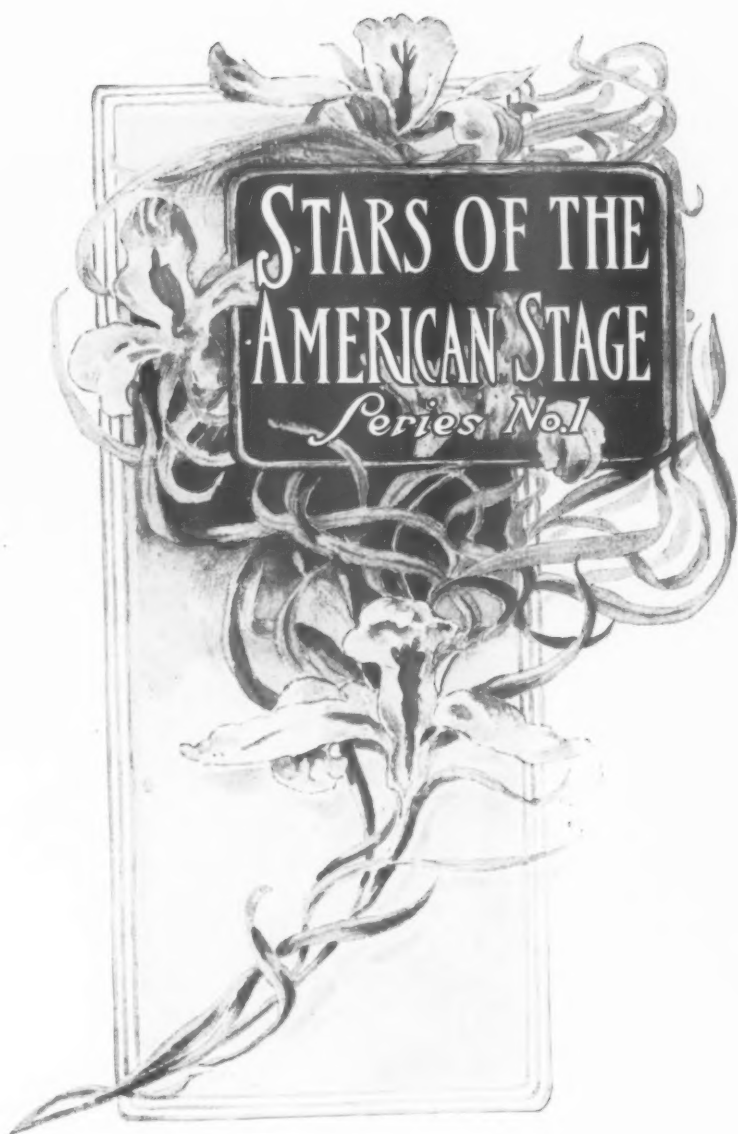
Use it not only as a breakfast dish, but as a rasher for roasts, chicken, turkey and fish. It gives a delightful flavor to all roasted or broiled meats.

Sliced to uniform thinness so that it browns evenly in the skillet or on the broiler.

Give *Swift's Premium Bacon* to the children—it's the kind they like best.

At All Dealers.

Swift & Company, U. S. A.





JULIA MARLOWE

Born in Caldbeck, near Keswick, in Cumberland, August 17, 1870. Came to America in 1875. Educated at the public schools in Cincinnati and Kansas City. Made her first appearance on the stage at Ironton, Ohio, in 1882, in "H. M. S. Pinafore." She became a star in 1887, and in recent years has devoted herself to Shakespearean plays as co-"star" with E. H. Sothorn, whom she married.

Photograph, Copyright 1911, by Strauss-Peyton, Kansas City





MAXINE ELLIOTT

Born in Rockland, Maine, February 5, 1871. Educated at Notre Dame Academy, Roxbury, Massachusetts. Made her first appearance on the stage at Palmer's Theatre, New York, November 10, 1890, in "The Middleman." Was a member of Augustin Daly's company and, in 1903, became a "star" with the play, "Her Own Way." In recent years she has been living quietly in England.

Photograph by Strauss-Peyton, Kansas City



ETHEL BARRYMORE

Born in Philadelphia, August 15, 1879.
Made her first appearance on the stage
January 25, 1894, at the Empire Theatre, New
York, in "The Bauble Shop." Her first "star"
play was "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines,"
produced by Charles Frohman in 1901, after she
had played with William Gillette and Sir Henry
Irving in England. She is the wife of Russell Gris-
wold Colt, a millionaire.

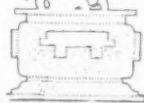
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



MAUDE ADAMS

Born at Salt Lake City, Utah, November 11, 1872. Made her first appearance on the stage as a baby in arms at the age of 9 months, in "The Lost Child." Made her first appearance on the New York stage at the Star Theatre, September 17, 1888, in "The Paymaster." Her recent productions of note are "Peter Pan," "What Every Woman Knows" and "Chantecler."

Photograph, Copyright 1909, by Charles Frohman





MINNIE MADDERN FISKE

Born in New Orleans, December 19, 1865. Educated in convents in Cincinnati and St. Louis. Appeared first in Richard III, at the age of three. Made her first appearance on the New York stage at Wallack's theatre, July 11, 1870. She was successful before her marriage to Harrison Grey Fiske, in 1889; but on her return to the stage, four years later, built up an even greater following. Her most recent play was called "The High Road."

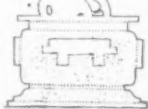
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



BLANCHE BATES

Born in Portland, Oregon, August 25, 1873. Made her first appearance on the stage in San Francisco, in 1894, in "The Picture." Was a member of the famous Augustin Daly Company in New York for a number of years, and recently has been one of the Belasco "stars." Her greatest individual success was won in "The Girl of the Golden West."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





LAURETTE TAYLOR

Known when a child actress as La Belle Laurette, gained her principal training in stock in Seattle. Made her first claim upon general attention by acting a sort of wild girl in Charles A. Taylor's "Yosemite." She was elevated to "star"-dom in Chicago, in J. Hartley Manners' "The Girl in Waiting." She played the Kanaka girl in "The Bird of Paradise," but scored the principal success of her career in "Peg o' My Heart," by J. Hartley Manners, to whom she was married last year.

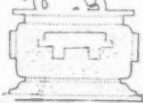
Photograph by Miffett Studio, Chicago



BILLIE BURKE

Born in Washington, August 7, 1885.
Educated in France, and made her first
appearance on the regular stage at the Prince
of Wales' Theatre, May 9, 1903. She made her
biggest hit, when, as leading woman for John Drew,
she played *Beatrice Dupri* in "My Wife," in her
first American appearance, in 1907. Since then she
has shone as one of Charles Frohman's "stars."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





JANE COWL

She gained a large part of her training with minor stock companies in the East. With these she toiled through a formidable line of parts and eventually found, in 1909-10, important employment in "Is Matrimony a Failure?" Leo Ditrichstein's adaptation of Blumenthal and Kadelburg's "The Door to Freedom." In 1910 she won high position as leading woman in Charles Klein's "The Gamblers." Since then, as the leading woman in Bayard Veiller's vivid melodrama, "Within the Law," she has won "star"-dom.

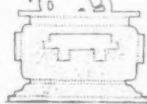
Photograph by Frank C. Bangs, New York



GRACE GEORGE

Born in New York City, December 25, 1879. Educated at Notre Dame Convent, New Jersey. Made her first appearance on the stage in the autumn of 1894, in "The New Boy," at the Standard Theatre, New York. Married to Wm. A. Brady, the producer. Her greatest individual success was in the role of *Cyprienne*, in "Divorcons," in 1907. She repeated her individual success with the part in a revival of the play by Mr. Brady last spring.

Photograph, Copyright 1911, by Moffett Studio, Chicago





"That is going to cost you just one hundred thousand dollars," said Jarvis, coldly.

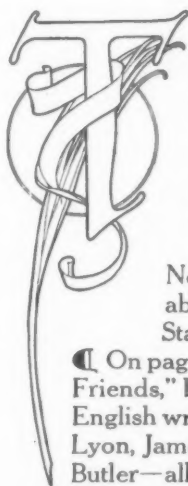
From
"THE ETERNAL CYCLE"

BY GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

Page 725

August
1913THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINEVol. XXI
No. 4

RAY LONG, Editor



THE ALL-STAR MAGAZINE.

¶ The enlarged All-Star issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, in which "to-be-continued-in-our-next" stories make their first appearance, is now in your hands. You will find the beginning of the greatest contemporary American novel, "What Will People Say?" by Rupert Hughes, on the next page. Following that is a desert masterpiece by Peter B. Kyne. Next a story from Kennett Harris, and then the remarkable Urner-Kummer collaboration, "The Woman Who Stayed at Home."

¶ On page 682 begins another remarkable novel, "The Passionate Friends," by H. G. Wells. It is a story of English society by a great English writer. And then George Bronson-Howard, Harris Merton Lyon, James Oliver Curwood, Frederick R. Bechdolt, Ellis Parker Butler—all names that guarantee the very best in short stories.

¶ All-Star has become our watchword. This number, remarkable as it is, is only the beginning. The September Red Book will add Irvin S. Cobb, author of the famous "Judge Priest" and "Adventure Island" stories; L. J. Beeston, the Englishman whose stories have the "Prisoner of Zenda" thrill; and Clifford S. Raymond, the first author to write American politics "down to the ground."

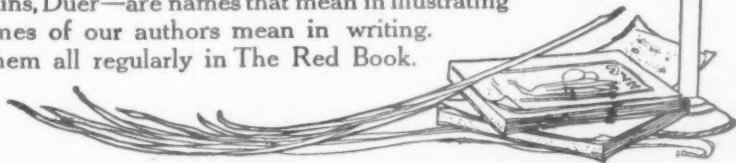
¶ Then October, the month when a grate fire and a magazine begin to make an evening's enjoyment, will bring the first installment of "The Ball of Fire," a dashing new novel of American life by George Randolph Chester, creator of "Wallingford" and "Bobby Burnitt."

¶ All-Star does not apply only to writers. A "Flagg" is now "the thing" in pictures, where the "Gibson Girl" used to queen it. That's why James Montgomery Flagg is illustrating the Hughes novel.

¶ John Newton Howitt's pictures for the Wells novel show why he was selected as the only painter who could interpret that story adequately on canvas.

¶ Frank Craig, an English Royal Academy man, whose illustrations for Hall Caine's "The Woman Thou Gavest Me" created such a sensation, has made beautiful paintings for L. J. Beeston's series of stories.

¶ Oberhardt, Bracker, Van Dresser, C. B. Falls, Hanson Booth, Popini, Hoskins, Duer—are names that mean in illustrating what the names of our authors mean in writing. You'll find them all regularly in The Red Book.



?

Persis
Cabot

W

HAT

A Novel

Illustrated
By JAMES
MONTGOMERY
FLAGG

FIFTH Avenue at flood-tide was a boiling surf of automobiles. But at nearly every corner a policeman succeeded where King Canute had failed, and checked the sea or let it pass with a nod or a jerk of thumb.

The young army officer, just home- come from the Philippines, felt that he was in a sense a policeman himself; for he had spent his last few years keeping savage tribes in outward peace. When he was away or asleep the Moros rioted at will. And so the traffic-officer of this other extreme of civilization kept these motor-Moros in orderly array only so long as he kept them in sight.

One glare from under his visor brought the millionaire's limousine to a sharp stop, or sent it shivering back into position. But once the vista ahead was free of uniforms, all the clutches leaped to the high; life and limb were gaily jeopardized and the most appalling risks run with ecstasy.

The law of New York streets and roads forbids a car to commit at any time a higher speed than thirty miles an hour; and never a man that owns one but would blush to confess it incapable of breaking that law.

As Lieutenant Forbes watched the surge of automobiles from the superior height of a motor-bus, it amused him to see how little people lose of the childhood spirit of truancy and adventure. All this grown-up, sophisticated world seemed to be run like a school, with joyous deviltry whenever and wherever the teacher's back was turned, but woe to whoso was caught; everyone winking at guilt till authority detected it; then everyone solemnly approving the punishment.

As far as Forbes could see north or south, the roadway was glutted from curb to curb with automobiles. And their number astonished him even less than their luxury.

Many of the cars were gorgeously upholstered. *Aladdin's* divans of comfort and speed; and some of them were decorated with vases of flowers. Their surfaces were lustrous and many-colored, sleekly tremendous. They had not yet outgrown the imitation of the wooden frame, and their sides looked frail and satiny, unfit for rough usage and sure to splinter at a shock. But he knew that they were actually built of aluminum or steel, burnished and enameled.

What he did not know was that the people in them, lolling relaxed and apparently as soft of fiber as of skin, were not the weaklings they looked. They too, like their cars, only affected fatigue and ineptitude, for they also were built of steel and their splendid engines were capable of velocities and distances that

WILL PEOPLE SAY?

Of New York Life Of To-Day.

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "Excuse Me," "The Old Nest," "The Gift Wife," "Miss 318," "Zal," etc.

would leave a gnarled peasant gasping. This was one of the many things he was to learn.

From his swaying eyrie he seemed to be completely lost in a current of idle wealth. The throng, except for the chauffeurs, the policemen, and a few men whose trades evidently fetched them to this lane of pleasure—the throng was almost altogether women. And, to Forbes' eye, unused to city standards, almost all the women were princesses.

At first as his glance fell on each radiant creature, his heart would cry, "There is the one I could love! I never shall forget her beauty!" And before the vow of eternal memory was finished it was forgotten for the next.

There was one woman, however, that he could not forget, because he could not find out what she was like. In the slow and fitful progress up the Avenue, it chanced that his stage kept close in the wake of an open landaulet. The stage never fell far behind and never quite won alongside.

A young woman was alone in the tonneau. At least he judged that she was young though his documents were scant. Her head was completely hidden from his view by a hat that was just exactly big enough to accomplish that work of spite.

It was a sort of inverted flower-pot of straw—one of those astonishing jokes of millinery that women make triumphs of. It bore no ornament at all except a filmy white bird-of-paradise feather

stuck in the center of the top and spraying out in a shape that somehow suggested an interrogation-mark.

Even a man could see that it was a beautiful plume and probably expensive. It had a sort of success of impudence alone there and it mocked Forbes by trailing along ahead of him, an unanswerable query. He grew eager and more eager to see what flower-face was hidden under the overturned straw flower-pot of a hat. Now and then as the stage pushed forward, he would be near enough to make out the cunning architecture of the mystery's left shoulder and the curious felicity of her left arm. Seen thus detached they fascinated him and kindled his curiosity. Once he was swept near enough to glimpse one rounded knee crossed over the other, and one straight shin creasing a tight skirt, and a high-domed instep sloping to the peak of one slim shoe.

And once, when the traffic was suddenly arrested, he was close enough to be wildly tempted to bend down and snatch off that irritating hat. He would have learned at least the color of her hair, and probably she would have lifted her startled face to view like a reverted rose. He was a daring soldier, but he was not so fearless as all that. Still, he heard her voice as she gossiped to a momentary neighbor who raised his hat in a touring-car held up a-beam her own.

Her voice did not especially please him; it was almost shrill and it had the metallic glitter of the New York voice.

Her words too, were a trifle hard—and as unpoetic as possible:

"We had a rotten time," she said. "I was bored stiff. You ought to have been there."

And then she laughed a little at the malice implied. The policeman's whistle blew and the cars lurched forward. And the stage lumbered after them like a green hippopotamus.

Forbes began to feel a gnawing anxiety to see what was under that paradise feather. He assumed that there was beauty there, though he had learned from shocking experiences how dangerous it is to hope a woman beautiful because the back of her head is of good omen.

It became a matter of desperate necessity to overtake that will-o'-the-wisp chauffeur and observe his passenger. Great expectations seemed to be justified because nearly every policeman saluted her and smiled so pleasantly and so pleasedly that the smile lingered after she was far past.

Forbes noted, too, that the people she bowed to in other cars or on the sidewalk, seemed to be important people, and yet to be proud when her hat gave a little wren-like nod in their directions.

At Fifty-first Street, in front of the affable gray Cathedral, there was an unusual delay while a contemptuous teamster perched atop a long steel girder drove six haughty Percherons across the Avenue; drove them slowly and puffed deliberate smoke in the face of the impatient aristocracy.

Here a dismounted mounted policeman paced up and down, followed by a demure horse with kindly eyes. This officer paused to pass the time of day with the mysterious woman, and the horse put his nose into the car and accepted a caress from her little gloved hand. Again Forbes heard her voice:

"You poor old dear, I wish I had a lump of sugar."

It was to the horse that she spoke, but the officer answered:

"The sight of you, ma'am, is enough for um."

Evidently he came from where most policemen come from. The lady laughed

again. She was evidently not afraid of a compliment. But the policeman was. He blushed and stammered:

"I beg your pardon, Miss—"

He gulped the name and motioned the traffic forward. Forbes was congratulating himself that at least she was not "Mrs." Somebody, and his interest redoubled, just as the young woman leaned forward to speak to her chauffeur. She had plainly seen that there was a policeless space ahead of her, for the driver put on such speed that he soon left Forbes and his stage far in the lurch.

Forbes, seeing his prey escaping, made a mental note of the number of her car, "48150, N. Y., 1913."

He had read how the police traced fugitive motorists by their numerals, and he vowed to use the records for his own purposes. He must know who she was and how she looked. Meanwhile he must not forget that number, 48150, N. Y., 1913.

II

Helpless to pursue her with more than his gaze, Forbes watched from his lofty perch how swiftly she fled northward. He could follow her car as it thridded the unpoliced traffic, by that dwindling bird-of-paradise plume, that sphinxic riddle of a featherly question-mark.

He mused indulgently upon her as she vanished: "She breaks the law like all the rest when no one is there to stop her. She wheedles the police with a smile, and behind their backs she burns up the road."

Evidently there were narrow escapes from disaster. One or two pedestrians leapt like kangaroos to escape her wheels. Once or twice collisions with other cars were avoided by sharp swerves or abrupt stops.

The feather went very respectably across the Plaza, for there were policemen there, but, once beyond, the feather diminished into nothingness with the uncanny speed of a shooting star.

She was gone. And now he wondered whither she sped, and why. To what tryst was she hastening at such dreadful pace, with such rash desire? He felt almost a jealousy, at least an envy, of

the one who waited at the rendezvous. She might be going to a hospital to visit a sick maid; but she probably wasn't.

His futile curiosity was cut short. The stage was turning out of Fifth Avenue, to cross over to Broadway and Riverside Drive. Forbes was not done with this street. He rose to leave the bus. It lurched and threw him from bench to bench. He negotiated with difficulty the perilous descent, clutched the hand-rail in time to save himself from pitching head-first to the street, clambered down the little stairway with ludicrous awkwardness, stepped on solid asphalt with relief, and walked south.

The press gradually thickened and before long it was dense and viscid, as if theatre audiences were debouching at every corner.

The panorama of windows was nearly as beautiful as the army of women. The windows, dressed with all expertness, were silently proffering wares to tempt an empress to extravagance.

A few haberdashers displayed articles of strange gorgeousness for men—shirt-patterns, scarves, bathrobes, waistcoats that rivaled Joseph's; but mainly the bazaars appealed to women or to the men who buy things for women.

The windows seemed to say: "How can you carry your beloved past my riches? Or go home to her without some of my delights?" "How fine she would look in my folds!" "How well my diamonds would bedeck her hair or her bosom!" "If you love her, get me for her!" "It is shameful of you to pretend not to see me, or to confess to poverty!" "Couldn't you borrow money somewhere to buy me? Couldn't you postpone the rent or some other debt awhile? Perhaps I could be bought on credit."

Show-windows and show-women were the whole cry. The women seemed to be wearing the spoils of yesterday's pillage, and yet to yearn for to-morrow's. Women gowned like mannikins from one window gazed like hungry paupers at another window's mannikins.

The richness of their apparel, the frankness of their allure, were almost frightful. They seemed themselves to be shop-windows, offering their graces

for purchase, or haughtily labeling themselves "sold." Young or antique, they appeared to be setting themselves forth at their best, their one business a traffic in admiration.

"Look at me! Look at me!" they seemed to challenge one after another: "My face is old, but so is my family." "My body is fat, but so is my husband's purse." "I am not expensively gowned, but do I not wear my clothes well?" "I am young and beautiful and superbly garbed, and I have a rich husband." "I am only a little school girl, but I am ready to be admired and my father buys me everything I want." "I am leading a life of sin, but is not the result worth while?" "My husband is slaving downtown to pay the bills for these togs, but are you not glad that I did not wait till we could afford to dress me like this?"

Lieutenant Forbes had been so long away from a metropolis and had lived in such rough countries, that he perhaps mistook the motives of the women of New York, and their standards, underrated their virtues. Vice may go unkempt and shabby and a saint may take thought of her appearance. Perhaps what he rated as boldness was only the calm of innocence; what he read as a command to admire was only a laudable ambition to make the best of one's gifts.

It seemed to him that the women of other places than New York must have dressed as beautifully but in a more innocent way. Here the women were not so much feminine as female. They appeared to be thinking amorous thoughts. They deployed their bosoms with meaning, and their very backs conveyed messages. Their clothes were not garments but banners.

He had dwelt for years among half-clad barbarians, unashamed Igorrotes, but these women looked more naked than those. The more studiously they were robed, the less they had on.

A cynicism unusual to his warm and woman-worshipping soul, crept into Forbes' mind. He went along philosophizing:

"All these women are paid for by men. For everything that every one of these

women wears, some man has paid. Fathers, husbands, guardians, keepers, dead or alive, have earned the price of all this pomp.

"The men who pay for these things are not here: they are in their offices or shops or at their tasks somewhere, building, producing, or in their graves resting from their labors, while the spendthrift sex gads abroad, squandering and flaunting what it has wheedled.

"What do the women give in return? They must pay something. What do they pay?"

III

Forbes brooded like a sneering Satan for a time upon the dress parade, and then the glory of the procession overpowered him again. He felt that it would be a hideous world without its luxuries. It was well, he concluded, that men should dig for gold, dive for pearls, climb for aigrettes, penetrate the snows for furs, breed worms for silk, build looms and establish shops, all in order that the she-half of the world should adorn herself.

The scarlet woman on the beat, the pink girl, the white matron and the widow in the most costly and becoming weeds—they were all more important to the world than any other of man's institutions, because they were pretty or beautiful or in some way charming—as useless, yet as lovely, as music or flowers or poetry.

He was soon so overcrowded with impressions that he could not arrange them in order. He could only respond to them. The individual traits of this woman or that, swaggering afoot or reclining in her car, smote him. Every one of them was a *Lorelei* singing to him from her fatal cliff, and his heart turned from each to the next like a little rudderless boat.

Each siren rescued him from the previous, but the incessant impacts upon his senses rendered him to a glow of wholesale enthusiasm. He rejoiced to be once more in New York. He began to wish to know some of these women.

It was apparent that many of them

were ready enough to extend their hospitality. Many of them—beautiful ones, too, and lavishly draped—had eyes like grappling hooks. Their glances were invitations so pressingly urged that they inspired opposition. They expressed contempt in advance for a refusal. But men easily find strength to resist such invitations and such contempt.

It was not in these tavern-like hearts that Forbes would seek shelter. He wanted to find some attractive, some decently difficult woman to make friends with, make love to. He was heart-free, and impatient for companionship.

When a man is a soldier, an officer and young, well-made and well-bred, it is improbable that he will remain long without opportunity of adventure.

The woman of the bird-of-paradise feather was buried in Forbes' mind as deeply as if a balcony-full of *matinée* girls had collapsed upon her.

When he found her, he did not remember her any more than the others. She impressed him as a woman of extreme fragility, yet she was to test his strength to its utmost, his endurance, his courage, his readiness for hazard.

He had won a name among brave men for caution in approaching danger, for courage in the midst of it, and for agility in extricating himself from ambush and trap. This most delicate lady was to teach him to be reckless, foolhardy, *maladroit*. She would wear him out in the pursuit of happiness. Under her tutelage he would run through scenes of splendor and scale the heights of excitement. He would know beauty and pleasure and intrigue and peril. He would know everything but repose, contentment, and peace. He would love her and hate her, abhor her and adore her; be her greatest friend and enemy, and she his.

At his first meeting with her, he pursued her without knowing who she was and without overtaking her. And she, not knowing she was pursued, unconsciously teased him by keeping just out of his reach and denying him the glimpse of her face.

Perhaps it would have been better for both if they had never come nearer to-

gether than in that shadowy, that fore-shadowing game of hide-and-seek in the full sun among the throngs.

Perhaps it was better that they should meet and endure the furnace of emotions and superb experiences in gorgeous scenes.

But whether for better or worse, they did meet and their souls engaged in that grapple of mutual help and harm that we call love.

The world heard much of them. As always and inevitably, it misunderstood and misjudged, ignoring what justified them, not seeing that their most flippant moments were their most important and that when they seemed most to sin, they were clutching at their noblest crags of attainment.

It is such fates as theirs that make the human soul cry aloud for a God to give it understanding, to give it another chance in a better world. The longing is so fierce that it sometimes becomes belief. But while we wait for that higher court, it is the province of story-tellers to play at being more just judges than the popular juries are.

Meanwhile, Forbes was unsuspecting of the future and unaware of nearly everything except heart-fag and foot-weariness. When he returned to his hotel he was a tourist who has done too much art-gallery. Fifth Avenue had been an ambulant Louvre of young mistresses, not of old masters.

He crept into a tub of water as hot as he could endure and simmered there, smoking the ache out of him, and imagining himself as rich as *Haroun al Raschid*, instead of a poor subaltern in a hard-worked little army, with only his pay and a small sum that he had saved mainly because he had been detailed to regions where there was almost nothing fit to buy.

The price of his room at the hotel had staggered him, but he charged it off to a well-earned holiday and pretended that he was a millionaire. He rose from the steaming pool, and turned an icy shower on himself with shuddering exhilaration. His blood leaped as at a bugle call, a reveille to life.

He heard the city shouting up to his

windows and he began to slip on his clothes. And then he realized that he knew nobody among those roaring millions. He cursed his luck and flung into his bathrobe. As he knotted the rope, he felt that he might as well be a cloistered monk in a desert as his friendless self in this wilderness of luxury.

Happiness was bound to elude him as easily as that woman of the white query-plume eluded him when he in his ten-cent bus pursued her in her five-thousand-dollar landaulet. All he had of her was the back of her hat and the number of her car: 41508, N. Y., 1913. Or was it 85140, N. Y.?—or—what the devil was the number?

He had not brought away even that!

IV

Nothing can be lonelier than a room in even the best hotel, when one is lonesome and when one's window looks out upon crowds. Forbes had pitched his tent at the Knickerbocker and his view was of Longacre Square.

The *Times* Building stood aloft, a huddled giraffe of a building. A fierce wind spiraled round it and played havoc with dignity. It was an ill-mannered bumpkin wind from out of town, with a rural sense of humor. Women pressed forward into the gale, bending double and struggling with their tormented hats and writhing skirts. They seemed to make an attractive picture to some of the men, till they felt their own hats caught up and kited to the level of the fourth and fifth story windows.

A flock of newsboys, as brisk as sparrows, drove a hustling trade in recovering headgear for men who were as ashamed of bare heads as of a nakedness. The gamins darted among the street cars and automobiles, risking their lives for dimes as sparrows for corn, and escaping death as miraculously.

At the western end of Forty-second Street stood an oblong of sunset like a scarlet canvas on exhibition. Then swift clouds erased it and gusts of rain went across the town, in volleys of shrapnel clearing the streets of a mob. Everybody made for the nearest shelter.

The onset ended as quickly as it began. The stars were in the sky as suddenly as if some one had turned on an electric switch. On the pavements black with wet and night the reflected electric lights trickled. All the pavements had a look of patent leather.

Forbes sat in the dark room in an arm-chair and muffled his bathrobe about him, watching the electric signs working like solemn acrobats—the girl that skipped the rope, the baby that laughed and cried, the woman that danced on the wire, the skidless tire in the rain, the great sibyl face that winked and advised chewing gum as a panacea, the kitten that tangled itself in thread, siphons that filled glasses—automatic electric voices shouting words of light.

Forbes wanted to be among the crowds again. He could not tolerate solitude. He resolved to go forth. It inspired him with pride to put on his evening clothes. While he dressed, he sent his silk hat to be ironed by the hotel valet. It came back an ebon crown.

He set it on his head, tapped the top of it smartly, swaggered to the elevator, bowed to the matronly floor-clerk as to a queen, went down to the main dining-room, and tried to look at least a duke. He was glad to be in full dress, for the other people were. The head waiter greeted him with respect, and handed him the bill of fare with expectation.

He ordered more than he had appetite for, and tried not to blench at the prices.

The flowers, the shaded candles, the tapestries, the china and the glass and silver, the impassioned violinist leading the sonorous orchestra—all gave him that sense of royalty from which money is most easily wooed. But the cordiality of the thing was most fascinating. The whole city seemed to be attending a great reception. New York was giving a party.

And now at last he was in New York again—in it, yet not of it; a poor relation at the wedding feast. He lingered at his solitary banquet like a boy sent away from the table and forced to eat by himself. His extrusion seemed to be a punishment for not being rich. But while his funds held out to burn, he would pretend.

He called for his account, paid it with a large bill, and ignored the residue with a ruinous lifting of the brows, as he accepted a light for his exotic cigar.

He helped to put false ideas in the hatboy's head with the price he paid for the brief storage of his hat and coat and stick. He sauntered to the news-stand with the gracious stateliness of a czarevitch incognito, and asked the Tyson agent:

"What's a good play to see?"

The man named over the reigning successes, and some of their titles fell strangely pat with Forbes' humor:

"Romance," "The Poor Little Rich Girl," "Oh, Oh, Delphine!" "Peg O'My Heart," "The Lady of the Slipper," "The Sunshine Girl."

"They're mostly about girls," Forbes smiled.

"They mostly always are," the agent grinned. "But there's others: 'Within the Law,' 'The Argyle Case,' 'The Five Frankforters,' 'Years of Discretion.'"

"I reckon I'd better see 'Within the Law.' I've heard a good deal about that."

"I guess you have. It's been a sell-out for months."

"Can't I get in?"

"I'm afraid not. How many are you?"

"One."

"One? Let me see. Here's a pair ordered by a party that hasn't called for them. Could you use them?"

"I could put my overcoat in one seat," Forbes groaned, at this added irony in his loneliness and penury.

"I'd split the pair, but it's too late to sell the other one."

"I'll take both," Forbes sighed, and waved a handsome five-dollar bill farewell.

The boy who twirled the squirrel cage door told him that the theatre was just down the street, and received a lavish fee for the information. Forbes was soon in the lobby but the first act was almost finished. Rather than disturb the people already seated, he stood at the back, leaned over the rail and thrilled instantly to the speech of the shop girl sentenced to the penitentiary for a theft she was not guilty of, and warning the

proprietor that she would amply revenge herself when she came back "down the river." At the height of the outcry of militant innocence, Forbes heard the susurrus of robes and turned to see a small group of later comers than himself.

At the head went something that he judged to be a woman, though all he saw was a towering headdress, a heap of elaborately coiffed hair, a wreath of mist, an indescribably exquisite opera-cloak shimmering down to an under cascade of satin. This tower of fabrics went along as if it were carried on a pole, and Forbes could see no semblance of human shape or stride inside it. But he judged that it contained a personality, for it paused to listen to something another pile of fabrics said to it, and from both came a snicker—or was it only a frou-frou of garments? In any case it angered the part of the audience adjacent. The group went down the side aisle, up a few steps to the little space behind the box.

From where he stood Forbes could see the usher helping them lay off their wraps. They showed no anxiety to catch the remainder of the act, but stood gossiping while the frantic usher waited, not daring to reprimand them, yet dreading the noise of their incursion.

Forbes watched one of the clothes-horses stripped of its encumbrances.

From somewhere in the chaos two long-gloved arms came up; they were strangely shapely; they made motions like swan's necks dipping into water lilies. Something like a garland of fog came away, and a head on a throat appeared, a bust set upon a heap of drapery. Then the opera-cloak slipped off into the usher's hands. And now design emerged; a woman stood revealed. The head and throat were seen to be attached to a scroll of shoulders, and a figure like a column rose from the floor—strangely like a column it was, and so slender that there was merely the slightest inslope of waist, merely the slightest entasis at the hips.

In other periods only portions of the human outline have been followed by the costume. The natural lines have been

broken, perverted and caricatured by balloon-sleeves, huge farthingales or panniers like a jennet's packsaddles, the incredible Botocudo ideal of the bustle, corsets like hour-glasses, concentric hoops about the legs with pantalets coquetting inanely at the ankles—the almost impossible facts of fashion.

To-day—and especially to-night—the costume is hardly more of a disguise than the gold or bronze powder smeared on by those who pose as statues at the vaudeilles. Inside their outer wraps, women rather wall-paper themselves than drape their forms. It is saner so, and more decent too, perhaps.

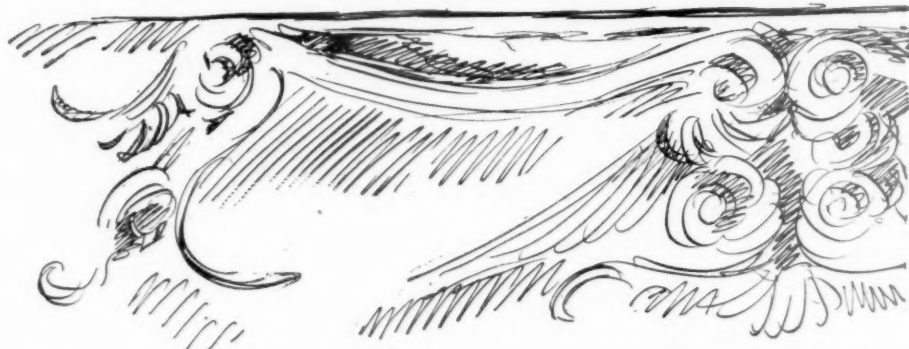
And yet Forbes stared at this woman as Adam must have stared at Eve when the scales were off his eyes. Even her hair was almost all her own, and it was coiled and parted with simple grace. Her head-dress was something bizarre—not a tiara of diamonds, but a black crest with a pearl or two studding it; the iridescent breast of a lyre bird it was, though he did not know. A cord of pearls was flung around her throat. At the peak of each shoulder her gown began, but the two elements did not conjoin till just in time above the breast and just a little too late at the back.

The fabric clung lovingly to the loins, thighs, and calves, so closely that an inverted V must be cut between the ankles to make walking possible at all. There was a train of a fishtail sort, a little twitching afterthought. And so this woman-shape came forth from shapelessness as Aphrodite from the sea-foam.

Forbes was so startled that he felt all the chagrin of one who catches himself staring at a woman just returned from the surf in a wet bathing suit. He shifted his eyes from her. When he looked back she had vanished into the crimson cavern of the box. The other women followed her; and the men them. They seated themselves just as the curtain fell.

And now Forbes felt at liberty to go to his own seat.

He had not yet seen the face of the woman of whom he had seen so much else. She was talking to a man in the interior of the box. Her back was turned to the house.



Forbes rose to go to his seat, but Ten Eyck pressed him into his chair with powerful hands. He stayed put, creature who had fascinated him from afar and who terrified



But the play no longer held him. He could think of only one thing. He was posted at the side of this
him anear, and whose last name he did not yet know.

It never occurred to Forbes that it might be the same back he had followed up the Avenue. How could he have told?

That back was clothed and cloaked, and even that famous left arm was sleeved. These shoulder-sheaths, not blades, were so astoundingly bare that he felt ashamed to look at them. Their proprietress was evidently not ashamed to submit them for public inspection. One might not approve her boldness, but one could hardly fail to approve her shoulders. When she moved or shrugged or laughed or turned to speak, their exquisite integument creased and rippled like shaken cream.

At length the footlights went up, the curtain went up. The three women aligned themselves in profile along the rail as if they were seated on invisible horses. The men were mere silhouettes in the background.

The bulk of the audience was in darkness, but the people in the boxes were illumined with a light reflected from the scenery, and it warmed them like a dawn glowing upon peaks of snow.

And now at last Forbes saw the face he had watched for with such impatience. It did not disappoint him. At first she gave him only the profile, but that magic light of stagecraft was upon it; and, once, she turned her head and cast a slow, vague look along the shadowy valley of the audience. She could not have seen him, but he saw her and found her so beautiful, so bewitchingly beautiful and desirable that he caught his breath with a stitch of pain, an ache of admiration.

Just a moment her eyes dreamed across the gloom, and she turned back to watch the stage. It was like a parting after a tryst. Then she broke the spell with a sudden throe of laughter. The little blackmailer on the stage was describing her efforts to learn the ways of society and the technique of pouring tea and pretending to like it. She swore, and the audience roared. Formerly an actor could always get a laugh by saying "damn." Now it must be a woman that swears.

Jarred back to reasonableness by the

shock of laughter, Forbes looked again to the box to see what manner of woman this woman went with. One of them was tiny but quite perfect. She had the face of a *débutante* under the white hair of a matron. If her age were betrayed by her neck, the dog-collar of pearls concealed the ravage. She sat exceedingly erect and seemed to be cold and haughty till another splurge of slang from the blackmailer provoked her to a laugh that was like a child's.

The other woman laughed too, laughed large and wide. She was beautiful, too, a Rubens ideal, drawn in liberal rotundities, cheeks, chin, throat, bust, hips. No Cubist could have painted her, for she was like a cloud of soap-bubbles. Her face was a great baby's.

The men were almost invisible, mere cut-outs in black and white.

None of them had the jaded look of boredom that Forbes supposed to be the chief characteristic of New York wealth. They were as eager and irrepressible as a box-load of children fighting over a pound of chocolates at a circus.

One of the men leaned forward and whispered something; all the women turned to hear. They forgot the stage, though the situation was critical. They chattered and laughed so audibly that the audience grew restive; the people on the stage looked to be distressed.

Forbes was astonished at such bad manners from such beautiful people. He wondered how the play could go on. He had heard of actors stepping out of the picture to rebuke such disturbers of the peace. He expected such an encounter now.

Then somebody in the audience hissed. Somebody called distinctly, "Shut up!" The group turned in surprise, and received another hiss in the face. Silence and shame quieted them instantaneously. The women blushed like grown girls threatened with a spanking. Tremendous blushes spread all over their crimson backs.

Forbes could see that they wanted to run. A kind of pluck held them. They pretended to toss their heads with contempt, but the mob had cowed them so completely that Forbes felt sorry for

them—especially for her. She was too pretty for a public humiliation.

When the curtain fell on the second act Forbes saw one of the men in the box rise and leave along the side aisle. Forbes knew the man. His name was Ten Eyck—Murray Ten Eyck.

Forbes dreaded to repeat that voyage through the strait between knees and seat backs, but he had seen at last a man he knew. And the man he knew, knew the woman he wanted to know.

V

The women in the row glared hatpins at Forbes and groaned as they rose and hunched back to let him pass.

He apologized meekly, yet continued on his course. By the time he was in the open, Ten Eyck had disappeared. He was not in the lobby, nor among the men smoking on the sidewalk, or dashing across the street to one of the cafés where coffee could not be obtained. Forbes found his man at last in the smoking-room below stairs.

He was puffing a cigarette and met Forbes' eager glance with such blank indifference that Forbes' words of greeting stopped in his throat.

To explain his presence in the smoking-room, Forbes lighted a cigar, though he knew that he could have but a few puffs of it. And it was such a good cigar! There can only be so many good cigars in the world.

The two men paced back and forth on criss-crossing paths, as violently oblivious of each other as the two traditional Englishmen who were cast away on the same desert island and had never been introduced.

It was not till Murray Ten Eyck flung down his cigarette and made to leave, that Forbes mustered nerve enough to speak in his Virginian voice:

"Pardon me, suh, but aren't you Mr. Mu'y Ten Eyck?"

"Yes," said Ten Eyck—simply that and nothing more. Forbes, nonplused at the abrupt brevity of the answer, tried again:

"I reckon you don't remember me."

Ten Eyck showed a hint of interest.

If he were a snob, he blamed it on his own weaknesses:

"I seem to, but—well, I'm simply awful at names and faces. A man pulled me out of the surf at Palm Beach last winter—I had a cramp, you know. I cut him dead two weeks later. So don't mind if I don't remember you. Who are you? Where was it we met?"

"It was in Manila. You were—"

"Oh, God bless me! you're Harvey Forbes. Well, I'll— Of course it's you." He was cordial enough now as he clapped both hands on Forbes' shoulders. "But how was I to know you, all dolled up like this? I used to see you in uniform, with cap and bronze buttons and sword and puttees. You were a lieutenant then—I dare say you're a colonel by now, what?" Forbes shook his head. "No? Well, you ought to be. You saved my life out in that God-forsaken hole. And now you're here! Well, I'll— Let's have a drink."

"No, thank you!"

"Yes, thank you!" He hurried Forbes up the stairs, out into the street and into Murray's peacock-rivaling café. With one foot on the rail, one elbow on the bar, and one elbow crooked upward, they toasted each other in a hearty "How!" Then, with libations tossed inward, the old friendship was consecrated anew.

"Tell me," said Ten Eyck, "are you alone—or with somebody? Don't answer if it will incriminate you."

"No such luck," groaned Forbes. "I'm alone, a cast-away on this deserted island."

"Well, I'm the little rescuing party. How long you here for?"

"I don't know. I was ordered to Governor's Island. I don't have to report for a week, so I thought I'd have a look at New York."

"That wont take you long. There's nothing going on, and nobody in town."

Forbes remembered the crowds he had seen and smiled. "I saw three ve'y charming ladies in that party of yours."

"Glad you like 'em. Come and meet 'em."

"Perhaps one of them is your wife. Are you ma'ied yet?"

"Not yet. Not while I have my health and strength."

"I'm right glad to hear it. I was beginning to feel afraid that you had married that wonderful one."

Ten Eyck shook his head and laughed.

"Who? Me? Me marry Persis Cabot?"

"Is that her name? Well, why not?"

"If you only knew her, you wouldn't ask why. I'm not a millionaire."

"She doesn't look mercenary."

"She's not. Money is nothing to her—she doesn't know what it means; she just tosses it away. She's like a yacht. You think it costs a lot to buy, but wait till you count the up-keep. Persis is a fine girl, a corker. She's a fine girl to play with. But you must promise not to marry her."

"I promise."

"Fine! Come along."

When they reached the head of the aisle to the box, he paused. He had the Southern idea of ceremonial courtesy, and he suggested that Ten Eyck had better ask the permission of the ladies before he introduced a stranger. Forbes had the rare knack of using the word "lady" without an effect of middle class.

And he had never forgotten that Ten Eyck had said to him once: "I love the extremes of society. I can get along with the highest, and I dote on the lowest, but, God, how I loathe a middle-class soul!"

But Ten Eyck waived Forbes' scruples, dragged him to the box and presented him to the women and the two other men. Forbes was too much perturbed to catch a single name. Even the last name of Persis escaped both his memory and his attention.

Ten Eyck gave Forbes a glowing advertisement as a brilliant soldier and a life saver, and offered him his own chair next to Persis.

She had answered his low bow of homage with nothing more than a wren-like nod, and half a hint of a smile.

Ten Eyck threw Forbes into confusion by rebuking her:

"You'll have to do better than that, old girl. Mr. Forbes not only rescued me from the depths, but he told me

you were the most beautiful thing he ever saw on earth."

Persis smiled a little more cordially and murmured:

"That's very nice of him."

She was evidently so used to bouquets in the face that they neither offended nor excited her. But Miss—or was it—Mrs.—anyway, the plump woman interposed:

"He must have been referring to me. My mirror tells me I am fatally beautiful, and the Lord knows, there's more of me than of anybody else on earth."

Forbes was in a dilemma. He had not made the comment ascribed to him, yet he could hardly deny it. Nor could he deny the plump lady's claim to the praise. He simply flushed and smiled benignly on everybody.

Fortunately the lights sank just then and the curtain went up with a sound like a great "Hush!" The party, having been once rebuked, fell into silence. Forbes rose to go back to his own seat, but Ten Eyck, standing back of him, pressed him into his chair with powerful hands.

He stayed put. But the play no longer held him. He could think of only one thing. He was posted at the side of this creature who had fascinated him from afar and terrified him near, and whose last name he did not yet know.

The lesson of the previous act was not long remembered by the irrepressibles. One of the men, a queer little fellow he was, whispered a comment to Persis. She laughed and answered it. The other women had to be told. They laughed. Their voices gradually rose in pitch and volume.

When the thief in the play shot the stool pigeon with a silenced revolver, a man seated below the box was overheard to say:

"I wish somebody would invent a silencer for box-parties."

Again there were almost audible stares of reproach from the audience, and quietude settled down once more like a pall. At the end of this act, Forbes rose to go, but Ten Eyck checked him:

"What are you doing after the play?"

"Nothing."

"Come turkey-trotting with us."

"Turkey-trotting!" Forbes gasped. "Do nice people—"

"We're not nice people," said Persis, "but we do."

"Everybody's doing it, doing it," hummed the lady of the embonpoint, whose first name by now he had gleaned as Winifred.

Forbes was surprised to hear himself speaking as if to old acquaintances: "When I was in San Francisco six years or so ago, slumming parties were taking it up along the 'Barbary Coast.' And on my way East just now I read an editorial about its rage in New York, but I didn't believe it."

"It's awful," said the little man. "People have gone stark mad over it. The Mayor ought to stop it."

"Oh, Willie, don't be a prude," said Persis. "You know it's wholesomer than playing bridge all day and all night."

"And much less expensive," said the white-haired one.

"It's sickening," Willie insisted. "It's unfit for a decent woman."

"Thanks!" said Persis with a tone of zinc.

The little man made haste with an apology. "I don't mean you, my dear; of course, you dance it harmlessly enough, but—well—I don't like to see you at it, that's all."

"Your own mother is learning it," said Winifred.

"Oh, mother!" Willie gasped. "I gave her up long ago."

Ten Eyck intervened. Forbes remembered now that he was always intervening between extremists in the club-quarrels in Manila.

"What difference does it make?" he said. "All dancing is impure to some people. The waltz and polka used to be considered bad enough to get you kicked out of the churches. The turkey-trot is only vulgar when vulgar people dance it, and they'd be vulgar anyway, anywhere. The trot has set people to jigging again. That's one good healthy thing. For several years you couldn't get people to dance at all. Now they're at it morning, noon and night."

"The police ought to stop it, I tell

you," Willie insisted with a peevishness that was like a dash of vinegar. "I hate to see it."

"Then don't come along, my dear," Persis answered with a glint of temper.

Forbes did not like that "my dear." It might mean nothing, but it might mean everything.

VI

When the final curtain came down like a guillotine on the play, there was a general uprising, a sort of slow panic to escape from this finished place and move on to the next event—by street-car to a Welsh rabbit in a kitchenette, or by motor to a restaurant of pretence.

Everybody being in haste, everybody went slowly. In the lazy ooze-out of the crowd, Forbes, after a desperate struggle to retrieve his overcoat, was gradually shunted to the side of Persis. And willing enough to be there—proud to be there. He walked a little more militarily than he usually did in civilian's clothes.

He heard people whispering with a shrillness that Persis had evidently grown accustomed to, for she could not have helped hearing, yet showed no sign. And now, Forbes captured her last name, and it was familiar to him, little as he knew of social chronicles.

"Look! that's Miss Cabot," said one. "There's the Cabot girl you read so much about," said another. "She's got a sister who's a Countess or Marquise or something." Then Forbes learned by roundabout the last name of Willie, and learned it with alarm, from two of the sharpest whisperers:

"That's Willie Enslee with her, I suppose."

"I guess so."

"Don't see why they call that big fellow Little Willie."

"Just a joke, I guess."

"They say he's worth twenty million dollars."

"He looks it."

At any other time it would have amused Forbes immensely to be called so far out of his name, and to receive twenty million dollars by acclamation.

But now he could only busy himself with deductions: why did they assume that any man who was with Persis Cabot was sure to be Willie Enslee? Could it mean they were engaged? What else could it mean?

He glanced around to take another look at Willie Enslee. Now that he knew him for what he was, the situation was intolerable. Marry this dream of beauty to that cartoon, that grotesque who came hardly to her shoulder!

His glance had showed him that the men and women they had passed were looking up and down Persis' back like appraising drygoods merchants or plagiarizing dressmakers. When he turned his head forward, he saw that the women in front were inspecting her with even more brazen curiosity. It astounded Forbes to see such well-dressed people behaving so peasantly. But Persis seemed as oblivious of their study as if they were painted heads on a fresco. Forbes, however, flushed when their eyes turned to him, because he felt that they were saying: "That must be Willie Enslee," and "Why do they call that big thing Little Willie?"

Meanwhile Little Willie himself was giving the attendant at the switchboard set in the wall a punctured carriage check with which to flash the number on the sign outside.

There was a long wait for their own car, while motor after motor slid up and slid away as soon as its number had been bawled and its cargo had detached itself from the waiting huddle.

After the close, warm theatre Forbes flinched at the edged night wind coming from the river. With the caution of an athlete, he turned up his collar and buttoned his overcoat over his chest. But Persis stood with throat and bosom naked to the wind and to all those staring eyes, and never thought to gather about her even the flimsy aureole of chiffon that took the place of a scarf. And equally unafraid and unashamed stood Winifred and Mrs. Neff. (He had collected her name too, during the conversation that flourished throughout the last act.)

At length the footman who had

howled out other people's numbers held up a timid finger and murmured awesomely: "Mr. Enslee."

The limousine whose door he opened was by no means the handsomest of the line. Enslee was evidently rich enough to afford a shabby car. The three women bent their heads and entered with difficulty, their tight skirts sliding to their knees as they clambered in.

There was a great ado over the problem of room. Every man offered to walk or take a taxi. Ten Eyck made sure that Forbes should not be omitted. Ignoring his protests he bundled him into one of the little side seats and wedged himself with the women. The third man (still anonymous and taciturn) next inserted his bulk as a large cork in a small bottle.

Willie put his head in to ask:

"Where d'you want to go, Persis?"

"Trotting, of course," came from the crowded depths.

"But I don't think—"

"Then take me home and go to the devil."

"We'll trot," sighed Willie. He spoke to the chauffeur dolefully, then appeared at the door to wait helplessly:

"There seems to be no room for me."

"You're only the host," said Winifred. "Hop on behind."

"You can sit on my lap," said Ten Eyck.

And as that was the only vacant space, the big man lifted him up and set him there. The footman, reassured by the tip in his hand, grinned at the spectacle, and laughed as he closed the door: "Is you all in?"

Seven persons were packed where there was hardly space for five, but Forbes noted that they were as informal and good-natured as yokels on a hayride. All except Willie, and his distress was not because of the crowd.

The car had no more than left the theatre when Mrs. Neff was groaning:

"A cigarette, somebody, quick, before I faint!"

Winifred by a mighty twisting produced a concaved golden case, and snapped it open, only to gasp:

"Empty! My God, it's empty!"

Persis saved the day: "I have some.



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

He heard people whispering with a shrillness that Persis had evidently grown accustomed to. "Look! that's Miss Cabot," said one. "There's the Cabot girl you read so much about," said another. His glance showed him that the men and women they passed were looking up and down Persis' back like appraising dry goods merchants or plagiarizing dressmakers.

Give us a light, Willie, there's a dear."

As usual Willie had the counter-idea: "But, Persis, don't you think you could wait till—"

Her only answer was: "Murray, give me a light."

Ten Eyck called out: "Right-o, milydy, if Bob will hold our little host-let half a mo." And he deposited Willie in the arms of the big man while he fumbled in his waistcoat for a book of matches and passed it back into the dark. "Ere you are, your lydyship." He was forever talking in some dialect or other.

But Persis gave him her cigarette and pleaded: "It's so conspicuous holding a match to your face on Broadway. Light mine for me, Murray."

"It's highly unsanitary," said Ten Eyck, "but if you don't mind I don't. I fancy these cigarettes of yours would choke any self-respecting microbe to death."

Ten Eyck lighted her cigarette as delicately as he could, and handed it to her. The same service he performed for the other eager women, and the three were soon puffing the close compartment so full of smoke that the men felt no need of burning tobacco of their own.

When a particularly bright glare swept into the car from the street, the women made a pretense of hiding their cigarettes, but it was an ostrich-like concealment, and Forbes could see other women in other cabs similarly engaged. During his absence, smoking had evidently become as commonplace among the women as among the men.

Forbes, cramped of leg and choked of lung, was wondering at his presence here. It was a far cry from Manila. He had never dreamed when he showed an ordinary human interest in the melancholy Ten Eyck, fallen ill there on a jaunt around the world, that his courtesy in the wilderness would be repaid with usury in the metropolis. Nor had he learned from Ten Eyck's democratic manner that he was a familiar figure in the halls of the mighty. Forbes had cast an idle crust on the waters and lo, it returned as a frosted birthday cake!

He had come to town at noon a lonely stranger, and before midnight he was literally in the lap of beauty, and chumming with wealth and aristocracy in their most intimate mood.

The sidewalks outside were packed with theatre crowds till they spilled over at the curbs, and the streets were filled with all sorts of vehicles till they threatened the sidewalk. Guiding a car there was like shooting a rapids full of logs in a lumber drive, but Enslee's man was an expert charioteer.

Suddenly they whirled off Broadway and describing a short curve, came to a stop. A footman opened the door, but nobody moved.

Ten Eyck said: "The problem now is how do we get out. I'm so mixed up with somebody, I don't know my own legs." Like a Wise Man of Gotham he jabbed his thumb into the mixture, and asked: "Are those mine?"

"No, they are not!" said Winifred.

Willie was lowered ashore first. Bob What's-his-Name bulged through next; then Ten Eyck; then Forbes. Ten Eyck dropped into the gutter the three lighted cigarettes that had been hastily pressed into his hand, and turned to help the women out.

Forbes, wondering where they were, looked up and read with difficulty a great sign in vertical electric letters: "Reisenweber's."

Willie told his chauffeur to wait, and the car drew down the street to make room for a long queue of other cars. Ten Eyck led the flock into a narrow hall and filled the small elevator with as many as could get in. He included Forbes with the three women, and remained behind with Willie and Bob.

Crowded into the same space were two young girls, very pretty till they spoke, and then so plebeian that their own beauty seemed to flee affrighted. The blonde seraph was chanting amid her chewing gum:

"He says to me, 'If you was a lady you wouldn't 'a' drank with a party you never sor before;' and I come back at him, 'If you was a gempmum you'd 'a' came across with the price of a pint when you seen I was dyin' of thoist.'"

And the brunette answered: "You can't put no trust in them kind of Johns. Besides, he tangoes like he had two left feet."

Forbes was uneasy till Persis whispered: "Don't you just love them?" Then a door opened and admitted them to a crowded ante-room. While they waited for the car to descend and rise again with the rest of the party, the women gave their wraps to a maid, and Forbes delivered his coat and hat and stick across a counter to a hat boy.

When Ten Eyck, Willie and Bob appeared and had checked their things, the seven climbed a crowded staircase into an atmosphere riotous with chatter and dance-music of a peculiar rhythm.

But they could only hear and feel the throb of it. They could not see the dancers, so thick a crowd was in front of them.

A head-waiter appeared, and curt as he was with the rest of the mob, he was pitifully regretful at losing Mr. Enslee, who had failed to reserve a table and who would not wait.

It was humiliating to slink back down the stairs, regain the wraps and coats and hats, and make the two elevator-loads again. Willie alone was cheerful.

"Now, maybe, you'll go to the Plaza or some place and have a human supper."

"I'm going to have a trot and a tango if I have to hunt the town over," said Persis.

Willie gnashed his teeth, but had the car recalled, and asked her where she would go.

"Let's try the Beaux Arts," she said, and they huddled together once more.

"It's too bad we couldn't get in at Reisenweber's," Winifred pouted. "I was dying to see François dance, and have a dance with him."

Forbes felt well enough acquainted by now to ask: "Pardon my ignorance, but who is François?"

"Oh, he's a love of a French lad," said Winifred. "Everybody's mad over him. I used to see him in Paris dancing between the tables at the Café de Paris or the Pré-Catalan with some girl or other. Then somebody brought him over

here for a musical comedy, and he's been on the crest of the wave ever since."

"They say he's getting rich, dancing in theatres and restaurants and giving lessons at twenty-five per."

"Somebody was telling me he actually makes fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars a week," said Mrs. Neff.

"If I had that much would you marry me, Persis?" said Ten Eyck.

"In a minute," said Persis. "We might earn it ourselves. You dance as well as he does and you could practice whirling me around your neck."

"Then we're engaged," said Ten Eyck.

"It's outrageous," said Willie. "That fellow has an income equal to five per cent on a couple of million dollars."

"What you kicking about, Willie?" said Winifred. "You draw down twice as much and you never did a lick of work in your life."

"But Willie's father did," said Mrs. Neff. "He killed himself working."

"Willie has it much better arranged," said Bob. "Instead of Willie working for money, he has the money working for him."

"It works while he sleeps," said Winifred.

Forbes was thinking gloomily in the gloom of the car. This dancer, this mountebank François, was earning more in a week than the Government paid him in a year, after all his training, his campaigning, his readiness to take up his residence or lay down his life wherever he was told to.

Then he compared his income with Willie Enslee's. Enslee did not even dance for his supper, yet into his banks gold rained while pennies dribbled into Forbes' meager purse. Enslee's was not a precarious salary such as dancers and soldiers earned by their toil; it was the mere sweat from great slumbering masses of treasure.

Forbes felt no longer an exultation at falling in with these people. He felt ashamed of himself. He was no more a part of the company he kept, than a gnat on an ox, or a flea caught up in the ermine of a king. The air grew oppressive. He felt like a tenement waif pat-

ronized for a moment on a whim and likely to be tossed back to his poverty at any moment. He wanted to get out before he was put out. The very luxuries that enthralled him at first were intolerable now. The perfume of the women and their flowers lost its savor. Their graces had gone. They were all elbows and knees. He suffocated as in a Black Hole of Calcutta.

When a footman at the Café des Beaux Arts wrenched the door open and let the cool air in, it was welcome. Forbes moved to escape. But he was kept prisoner while Bob was sent as an *avant-courier*. He returned with the bad news that he was unable even to reach a head-waiter.

The car nosed round, turned with difficulty and went to Bustanoby's. It was the same story here.

"New York's gone mad, I tell you!" Willie raved. "And nobody is as crazy as we are. To think of us going about like a gang of beggars pleading to be taken in and allowed to dance with a lot of hoodlums and muckers. Even they won't have us."

"We'll try once more," said Persis. "The Café de Ninive."

After a brief further voyage along Broadway, the suppliant outcasts entered a great hall imposingly decorated with winged bulls and other Assyrian symbols. The huge space of the restaurant was a desert of tables untenanted save by a few dejected waiters and a few couples evidently in need of solitude.

An elevator took the determined Persis and her cohort up to another thronged vestibule.

* Persis had said to Willie in the car: "If you don't get us a table here, I'll never speak to you again."

With this threat as a spur, Little Willie accosted a large head-waiter, who shrugged his shoulders and indicated the crowd inside and the crowd outside. Willie fumbled in his pockets and his hand slyly met that of the head-waiter, who glanced into his palm, then up to heaven in gratitude, and laid aside all scruple.

Willie triumphantly beckoned Persis,

who approached the head-waiter with the pouting appeal of a lady of the court to a relenting sovereign.

"Fritz," she said, "you've got to take care of us."

"How can I refuse Mees Cabot," said Fritz. "Do you weesh to seet and watch the artists, or to seet weeth the dancers?"

"We want to dance," said Persis.

"There is one table resairve for a very great patron. You shall have it. I shall lose me my poseetion and he will tear down the beeliding, but that is better as to turn away Mees Cabot and Meester Enslee."

He whispered to a captain on the other side of a silk rope. The barrier was removed and they were within the sacred enclosure, while the baffled remnant gnashed its teeth outside.

The room they were in was a mass of tables, compacted around a central space, where professional entertainers were displaying the latest fashions in song and dance. A pair of Texas Tommy dancers were finishing a wild gallopade. For climax the man hurled the woman aloft as if he were playing *diabolo* with her, caught her on his long sticks of arms, and spun her round his neck; then let her drop head first, rescuing her from a crash by the breadth of a hair, swinging her back, between his legs, and across his hip. When her heels touched the floor, he bent her almost double and gazed Apache murder into her eyes. Her hair fell loose on cue, and then he righted her and they were bowing to the rapturous applause. They retired panting like hunted rabbits and sweating like stevedores.

And now a somewhat haggard girl dashed forward in a snow-bird costume and sang a sleigh-bell song. Little bells jingled about her, and the crowd kept time by tapping wine glasses with forks.

The words of the song were too innocent and unimportant to detain Persis. She felt herself drawn by the distant music of a turkey-trot in the farthest room. The warring counterpoint of the two orchestras only added to the excitement of the group. But the dance was just over and crowds were

settling down to their chairs, their deserted plates and glasses. Enslee's guide led them to the only empty table, whisked off the card "Reserved" and turned them over to a waiter.

While Willie scanned the supper-card, Mrs. Neff lapsed into reminiscence. It was the only sign she had given thus far that she had earned her white hair by age and not by a bleach.

"Funny how this building tells the story of the last few years," she said. "Two years ago we thought it was amusing to go to supper at a good restaurant after the theatre, have something nice to eat and drink, talk awhile and go home to bed. We thought we were very devilish, and preachers railed at the wickedness of late supper orgies. And now the place downstairs is deserted. Just taking late supper is like going to prayer-meeting.

"Then somebody started the cabaret. And we flocked to that. We ate rotten food and drank sour wine, and didn't care so long as they had some sensational dancer or singer cavorting in the aisle. They were so close you could hear them grunt and they looked like frights in their make-up. But we thought it was exciting and the preachers said it was awful. And now it's so tame and stupid that it is quite respectable.

"And now we are dancing in the aisles ourselves, crowding the professional entertainers off their own floors. And the preachers and editors are attacking this. Whatever we do is wrong, so, as my youngest boy says, 'What's the use and what's the diff?'"

"Only one thing worries me," said Winifred, as she peeled her gloves from her great arms and her tiny hands: "What will come next? Even this can't keep us interested much longer."

"The next thing," Willie snapped, "will be that we'll all go into vaudeville and do flip-flaps and the split and such things before a hired audience of reformed ballet girls."

"I hope they play a tango next," was all Persis said. "Willie, call a waiter and ask him to ask the orchestra to play a tango."

"Wait, can't you?" he protested.

"Let's get something to eat ordered first. We've got to buy champagne to hold our tables, but we don't have to drink the stuff. What do you want, Persis?—and Winifred?—Mrs. Neff, what do you want?—A little caviar to give us an appetite, what? What sort of a cocktail, eh? What sort of a cocktail, uh?"

Before an answer could be made, the orchestra struck up a tune of extraordinary flippancy. People began to jig in their chairs; many rose and were in the stride before they had finished the mouthsful they were surprised with; some caught a hasty gulp of wine with one hand while the other groped for the partner. The zeal to dance was the strangest thing about it.

"Come on, Murray," cried Persis; "Willie, order anything. It doesn't matter." Her voice trailed after her for she was already backing off into the maelstrom with her arms cradled in Ten Eyck's arms.

Bob Fielding, with his usual omission of speech, swept Winifred from her chair, and she went into the stream like a ship gliding from her launching chute. Mrs. Neff looked invitingly at Willie, but he answered the implication:

"I'll not stir till I've had food."

Forbes leaned over to explain to the marooned matron:

"I wish I could ask you to honor me, but I don't know how."

She smiled almost intolérantly and sank back with a sigh, just as a huge and elderly man of capitalistic appearance skipped across the floor and bowed to her knees. She fairly leaped to his arms. The two white polls mingled their venerable locks, but their curvettings were remarkably coltish. Mrs. Neff, who had sons in college and a daughter of marriageable age, was giving an amazing exhibition. She backed and filled and luffed like a yacht; she heeled and ducked like a yacht in a squall; she whirled like a dervish, slanting and swooping, her lithe little body draping itself closely about the capitalist's great curves, her little feet following his big feet, or retreating from them, like two white mice pursued by two black cats.



He was turkey trotting with Persis Cabot! They were gripping one another close; they were almost one flesh. Abruptly and all too soon the music stopped. The dancers applauded hungrily and the band took up the

They sp
last strain



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

They spun round and round with knees clamped together. They see-sawed with thighs crossed X-wise. last strains again. Forbes caught Persis to him and they reveled till the music repeated its final crash.

At first Forbes was disgusted; the one epithet he could think of was, "obscene." He felt that he was witnessing a tribe of savages in a mating season orgy. He had seen the Moros, the Igor-rotos, the Samoans and the Nautch girls of Chicago; and the meaning of this turmoil was the same. He knew that this dance was the invention of negroes. Its wanton barbarity was only emphasized by the fact that it was celebrated on Broadway, in the greatest city of what we are pleased to admit is the most civilized nation in the world.

He could not adjust it to his mind. In the eddies he saw women of the most manifest respectability, mothers and wives in the arms of their husbands, young women who were plainly what are called "nice girls," and wholesome looking young men of deferential bearing. Yet mingled with them almost inextricably, brushing against them, tripping over their feet, tangling elbows with them, were girls of precocious salacity, shopgirls of their own bodies, and repulsive veterans from the barracks of evil. And the music seemed to unite them all into one congress met with one motive: to exhibit their sensual impulses over the very borders of lawlessness.

Thus Forbes, left alone with Willie Enslee, regarded the spectacle with amazement verging on horror, and thought in the terms of Jeremiah and Ezekiel denouncing Jerusalem and Moab and Baal.

Meanwhile Willie Enslee studied the menu and gave his orders to the waiter. When the supper was commanded, Enslee lifted his eyes to the dancers, shook his head hopelessly and reaching across the table, tapped Forbes on the arm and demanded:

"Look at 'em! Just look at 'em! Can you believe your own eyes, eh? Now I ask you, I ask you, if you can see how a white woman could hold herself so cheap as to mix with those muckers, and forget her self-respect so far."

It was a weak voicing of Forbes' own repugnance, yet, as soon as Willie spoke, Forbes began to disagree with him. Willie was fatally established among

those people with whom one hates to agree.

And there might have been a trace of jealousy in Forbes' immediate anger at Enslee's opinions. In any case, here he was, in the notorious haunts of society, seated in its very unholy of unholy and gazing on its pernicious rites, and saying to his host:

"I must say I don't see anything wrong."

VIII

Harvey Forbes came of a Southern stock that inherited its manners with its silver. Both were a trifle formal, yet very gracious and graceful.

The family had lost its silver in the Civil War, but the formalities and the good manners remained as heirlooms that could neither be confiscated nor sold off.

He had known something of New York as a cadet at West Point; he had known a few of its prominent families, but principally Southerners.

He knew that the careful people of that day would have shuddered at the thought of dancing in public. They surrounded admission to their festivities with every possible difficulty and conducted themselves with rigid dignity, in the general eye. Even the annual event of the Charity Ball was countenanced only for the sake of charity, and fell into disfavor because of the promiscuity of it.

In the Philippines, Forbes had seen the two-step drive out the waltz; but it had not there, as here, almost ended the vogue of dancing altogether.

And now after a few years of immunity, people were tripping again as if a plague of dancing-sickness had broken out. The epidemic had taken a new form. Grace and romance were banished for grotesque and cynical antics.

It was a peculiar revolution in social history, that people who for so long had refused to dance in public or at all should take up the dance and lay down their exclusiveness with a sort of frenzy; and that they should be converted to these steps by a dance that

had first startled the country from the vaudeville stages, and had been greeted as a disgusting exhibition even for the cheaper theatres.

By a strange insidiousness, the evil rhythms had infected the general public. The oligarchy was infatuated to the point of finding any place a fit place. The aged were hobbling about. The very children were capering and refusing the more hallowed dances.

Forbes was not ready to see how quickly such things lose their wickedness as they lose their novelty and rarity. "The devil has had those tunes long enough," said John Wesley when he turned the ribald street-ballads into hymns.

But with Forbes, as with everybody, vice lost her hideous mien when her face became familiar. Like everybody else, he first endured, then pitied, then embraced. Later he would talk as Persis did, and Ten Eyck: he would proclaim the turkey-trot a harmless romp, and the tango a simple walk-around.

But for the present, he was smitten with revulsion. The very quality of the company had served as a proof of the evil motive.

Even though he told Willie Enslee he saw nothing wrong, he sat gasping as at a turbulent pool of iniquity.

Motherly dowagers in ball-costumes bumped and caromed from the ample forms of procuresses. Young women of high degree in the arms of the scions of great houses jostled and drifted with walkers of the better streets, chorus girls who "saved their salary," sirens from behind the counters.

Forbes watched with the eager eyes of a fisher the reappearances of Persis. It pleased him to see in her manner and in Ten Eyck's an entire absence of grossness, but it hurt him surprisingly to see her in such a crew and responding to the music of songs whose words, unheard but easily remembered or imagined, were all concerned with "teasing," "squeezing," "tantalizing," "hynotizing," "honey babe," "hold me tight," "keep on a-playin'," "don't stop till I drop," and all the amorous animality of the slums.

He found himself indignant at Ten Eyck's intimacy with the wonderful girl. They clung together as closely as they could, and breathe. Now they sidled, now they trotted, now twirled madly as on a pivot. Their feet seemed to be manacled together except when they dipped and touched each a knee to the floor and thrust the other foot far back.

Then gradually, in spite of him, the music began to invade his own feet. He felt a yearning in his ankles. The music took on a kind of care-free swagger, a flip boastfulness. He wanted to get up and brag too. His feeling for Ten Eyck was not of reproof, but of envy. He longed to take his place.

Ten Eyck brought Persis back to the table, and the other women returned, Mrs. Neff's partner shaking his head with a breathless satisfaction as he relinquished her.

The eyes of all the women were full of sated languor. They had given their youthful spirits play and they were enjoying a refreshed fatigue.

The waiter meanwhile had set cocktails about and deposited two silver pails full of broken ice from which gold-necked bottles protruded. And at each place there were slices of toast covered with the black shot of caviar.

The dancers fell on the appetizers with the appetite of harvesters. Persis thrilled Forbes with a careless:

"It's too bad you don't trot, Mr. Forbes."

"He's not too old to learn," said Ten Eyck. "It's really very simple—get up here a minute and I'll show you."

Forbes was embarrassed completely when Ten Eyck made him stand up and embrace him. But the people around made no fun of them. They were proselytes to the new fanaticism. Forbes, as awkward as an overgrown schoolboy, picked up a few ideas in spite of his reluctance.

While he was at some distance from the others, he said to Ten Eyck:

"There's one thing bewilders me: how can nice people, well-bred people afford to go out in public places and dance such dances?"

"As the Englishman said of the Niagara Falls, 'Wot's to prevent 'em?'"

"The fear of being conspicuous and getting themselves talked about."

"My boy," Ten Eyck sermonized, "the only people that get themselves talked about are the people that don't roam with the Romans. Persis is a fiend on being inconspicuous, and she dances with the rest. One of the leading women in New York gave a turkey-trot at a public restaurant in the middle of Lent. It's a phase we're passing through. When we're out of it, we'll be surprised. When bustles were in fashion it was indecent to be without one; a woman was talked about if she left it off. Persis and the rest are tangoing to keep from being talked about. That's all."

Forbes accepted this for gospel and determined to avoid the comments of the mob, by doing it.

"L'ave your pick in the air, the band's begun again," said Ten Eyck as the music began. "Come on, Winifred!"

Bob Fielding lifted Mrs. Neff to her feet and haled her away, and Persis was left to Forbes.

"Don't you want to try?" she said, with an irresistible simplicity.

"I'm afraid I'd disgrace you."

"You can't do that. Come along. We'll practice it here."

She was on her feet and he could not refuse. He rose and she came into his arms. Before he knew it they were swaying together. He had a native sense of rhythm and he had been a famous dancer of the old dances.

He felt extremely foolish as he sidled, dragging one foot after the other. He trod on her toes and smote her with his knee-cap, but she only laughed:

"You're getting it! Don't be afraid!"

Her confidence and her demand gave him courage like a bugle-call. But he could not master the whirl, till she said as calmly as if she were a gymnastic instructor:

"You must lock knees with me."

Somehow and quite suddenly he got the secret of it. The music took a new

meaning. With a desperate masterfulness, he swept her from their back-water solitude out into the full current.

He was turkey-trotting with Persis Cabot! He wanted everybody to know it. This thought alone gave him the braggadocio necessary to success.

Perhaps he was too busy thinking of his feet, perhaps the dance really was not indecent, but certainly his thoughts of her were as chivalrous as any knight's kneeling before his queen.

And yet they were gripping one another close; they were almost one flesh; their thoughts were so harmonious that she seemed to follow even before he led. She prophesied his next impulse and coincided with it.

They moved like a single being, a four-legged—no, not a four, but a two-legged angel, for his right foot was wedded close to her left, and her left to his right.

And so they ambled with a teetering, sliding hilarity. So they spun round and round with knees clamped together. So they see-sawed with thighs crossed X-wise, all intermingled and merged together. And now what had seemed odious as a spectacle was only a sane and youthful frivolity; he saw it as an April response to the joy of life, the glory of motion.

Abruptly and all too soon the music stopped. The dancers applauded hungrily and the band took up the last strains again. Again Forbes caught Persis to him, and they reveled till the music repeated its final crash.

Then they stood in mutual embrace for an instant that seemed a long time to him. He ignored the other couples dispersing to their tables to resume their interrupted feasts.

He was bemused with a startled unbelief. How marvelous it was that he should be here with her! He had come to the city a stranger, forlorn with loneliness, at noonday. And at noon of night he was already embracing this wonderful one and she him, as if they were plighted lovers.

**The next installment of "What Will People Say?"
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Hassayampa Jim

—By—
**Peter
B. Kyne**

Author of "The Three Godfathers," "The Hobbled Man," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY DOUGLAS DUER

THERE is a legend among the Pueblo Indians to the effect that whoso drinks of the Hassayampa and turns his eyes up stream will never tell the truth again; while he who drinks, but gets up with his gaze down stream, will never leave the desert.

A long time ago two men drank of the Hassayampa. If there be truth in the legend, then Bill Ward doubtless looked up stream, for shortly thereafter he became a stranger to truth and honor. His partner, Jim Titus, probably looked down stream, for certain it is that the spell of the Hassayampa enveloped him. They went their separate ways and for forty years their trails had never crossed again. This is a significant fact but not vital, as we shall presently see. Our story concerns Jim Titus, who looked down stream, and through the magic of the Hassayampa became a Desert Rat.

Hassayampa Jim picked his way in and out between the rocks and Joshua trees, crooning queer little songs to his two burros. There was a far-away look in Jim's faded blue eyes, as if he were day dreaming, as indeed he was. Having drunk of the Hassayampa, it was quite natural that Jim should be a dreamer,

and just now he was dreaming of gold. Gold was one of his two favorite dreams. For forty years he had drawn much consolation from gold in the prospective sense, and in all those forty years he had not slept under a roof a dozen times. He had remained true to his destiny. He was a wanderer. From the Rye Patch and Squaw valley, down through Windy Gap and Furnace Creek, across Death Valley and the Colorado, through the Harqua Halas and back to the Hassayampa; north again through the Mojave to Silver Peak; up the cool, still heights of Humboldt, around the Ubehebes and back again to the Hassayampa, the trail had lead him, seeking—seeking—sometimes he scarce knew what, any more. It had been gold, to begin with, and in a vague, indefinite way Jim thought it was gold still. He did not know that the desert had "got" him; that it had taken his little, faltering hopes and transfused them into something of its own vast inconsequence.

Hassayampa Jim didn't even realize that he had grown old—that nothing mattered any more, provided God sent sunrise and sunset and the solitude of the desert nights, where the stars burned with the clear incandescence of high, still open air. No; nothing mattered any more. All that Hassayampa Jim needed

now was room to wander, grub and water sufficient for his simple needs, the wood-smoke in his nostrils at eventide and the aroma of sage at dawn. With that he was content.

Just now Jim was wandering from Silver Peak to Hell's Bend, a blistered, woe-bitten inferno in the Funeral Range in the northern end of Death Valley. Jim knew the utter abandonment of this sink of misery, yet he faced it resolutely, for he was a Hassayampa and for such as he the desert held no terrors. Tales of fabulous wealth to be found in remote places are carried on every desert breeze, and Jim's wanderings had been as aimlessly unrestrained as the desert winds—and as profitless. Hence Jim wandered. He would have wandered anyhow, but in all things it is well to have an excuse, for the sake of one's sanity and self-respect—and for some years Jim had been aware that people in his world of elemental things had begun to assume a patronizing air toward him, as people will when dealing with a harmless lunatic.

Jim reflected upon this intolerant attitude of an ignorant and unsympathetic civilization, and as he trudged along he ceased his song in order to smile.

"They wouldn't think I was such a dumb fool arter all, if I was to stake out a hundred million dollar claim at Hell's Bend," he said aloud. "No, you bet they wouldn't. They'd be a-rubbin' elbows with me, an' a-smilin' and hand-shakin', an' it'd be 'Have a bottle o' wine, Mr. Titus;' 'Jim, old boy,' an' 'My friend, Mister James Titus,' an' 'How d'ye do, Jim? Hear you've struck it rich. How's chances f'r gettin' in on the ground floor?'"

"Dog gone them," Jim added ferociously. "I wont sell them a blamed share. I'll keep it all, every blasted share. I'll learn 'em."

From which 'it will be observed that Hassayampa Jim was more or less vindictive.

Presently Jim's two burros paused and hee-hawed interestedly, and Jim's glance, following the angle at which the burros' ears were tilted, rested upon the very newest thing in Nevada—the mining camp of Kelcey's Wells.

Hassayampa Jim pressed forward to

the edge of the rim rock that fringed the camp and gazed across the valley for the second time since he had become a Hassayampa. Forty years before, he had stood in this same spot and watched a cavalcade of Piutes making their summer hegira to the cool retreats of the mountains.

The memory was vivid—almost more vivid than the real picture that lay before him now. There was the same flare of hard, uncompromising colors, the same sullen buttress of *mal-pais* to the west, walling the vision with its doom of dead umber. Far to the south, the outlines of the Panimints were thrust upward through the haze, seeming to shrink again from the garish reality of shimmering earth and sky. In the foreground a desert raven pecked idly at the dried skull of a horse. Nothing was changed except the floor of the valley. A camp had grown up around Kelcey's Wells and wiped out the bright little spot of green that had cheered Jim's thirsty soul forty years ago.

With the shy instinct of the desert bred, Jim decided to pitch camp right where he stood. He was suspicious of mining camps. Moreover, he had purchased a few bundles of alfalfa as he passed McEnerney's "ranch" that morning, and his burros were hungry. If he camped closer to Kelcey's Wells, other burros would "horn in" and insist on sharing the delicacy.

"We'll flop here to-night," Jim announced aloud, and accordingly made his preparations to "flop." He removed the packs, spread out his bed, arranged his grub in a neat pile and covered it with a tarpaulin, and gave his stock of the alfalfa. Then, standing between the two burros as they nosed into the fodder, Hassayampa Jim stroked his white, rat-bristle moustache with quiet, meditative calm and gazed down over the rim-rock at Kelcey's Wells.

The crass, raw reality of the new camp came clamorously into his consciousness. He resented it, without knowing why this should be. All afternoon he stood there, gazing half sadly across the desert, rousing occasionally to eye this new capital of his harsh empire, each time feeling more keenly the affront of its presence.

It seemed but yesterday since he had passed that way. He could hardly believe that it was forty years. Overnight a city had grown, and slowly the conviction was forced upon Hassayampa Jim that he was an old, old man.

Slowly his mind ran back over the years. Even the red tin roofs and the rumble of the distant stamp mills did not disturb his retrospect. He had been little more than a youth when he went into the desert first and drank from the Hassayampa, looking down the little rill that had been a river when the world was young; but to-day he felt nothing of the old exultant thrill of those earlier years, when with men as hardy as himself he first dared this wilderness, belched up from some weird limbo of death. The thrill was gone with the vanished years, and only the desert remained, still mockingly beautiful and alluring in its promise of riches, off in the haze where men's bones lay white on the sands.

What a life he had lived! He had toiled underground in the big mines at Virginia City; he had delved, coyote-like, in countless prospect holes; he had gloated over his string of colors at the bottoms of dead, brackish streams; he had gambled and drunk and fought and loved with his fellows. How often had he faced death in the pride and strength of his youth! Jim sighed. He was of that breed of man to whom the approach of death but accentuates the sweetness of life. But the tide of years had swept him far beyond it now, and, though Jim did not know it, had left him scathless. In his world of elemental things Jim Titus had found a benediction. He knew the littleness of men and the puissance of God.

Nature has two ways of crushing men: one by granting their desires, and one by refusing them. Jim's hopes had been fulfilled and denied. Again the Fates were to give and again withhold, and the desert wanderer little knew, as he stood between his two burros, dreaming of the vanished past, that in Kelcey's Wells the last bitter draught awaited him.

Hassayampa Jim dreamed on. He was once again at Weeping Water, glibly so-called in the whimsical desert nomenclature, which delights in paradox and irony, and with a companion of heat and

thirst and misery he was uncovering gold.

His vision broadened. They were in San Francisco—San Francisco of the olden, golden, godless days, restless confluence of the tides of new destinies, loved old pagan city of the Argonauts. Jim smiled a cryptic smile, as in his dream he watched his partner and himself stowing their plethoric sacks of gold-dust behind a loose base board in the old What Cheer house. How suspicious they had been of banks!

Ah, days of vanished youth and blighted hopes, of shattered faith and confidence betrayed. Out of the chaos of Jim's *Paradise Lost* there loomed the face of a woman. Wealthy, youthful, bronzed, homely little Jim Titus had loved her then. Old, broken, sad little Jim Titus, desert rat, loved her now. She had been faithless, but it had not been her fault. He forgave her and loved her still. He felt again the cool of her cheek against his; he seemed to sniff again a faint, subtle odor of frangipani—

And then Jim Titus chuckled, like an odd little manikin gloating over some secret of the waste. A lank coyote sprang up from behind a near by rock and scuttled wildly away, for there was something unearthly in Jim's chuckle, something terrible and deadly.

Whenever Hassayampa Jim chuckled thus, he was thinking of the broadcloth suit he had ordered for the wedding! The humor of this thought lay in the fact that Jim had never called for the suit. He could never get over wondering what the tailor had done with it finally. Jim was such a little man! A most unusual customer for such a brave suit. Well, he had paid for the suit anyway, so the tailor hadn't been out anything. Jim always rejoiced to think he had paid for the suit, even while the thought of it caused him to live over again that dreadful moment of misery when he realized that the girl was gone, with his partner and his gold. Well, Jim didn't blame her. She might not have known about the gold, and women, even the best of them, are easily influenced. Bill Ward was a big man, a jovial, light-hearted lad, with a jest in his eyes, and the blarney that women love fell naturally and gracefully from the tip of his forked tongue. And he was

handsome, too, as beautiful as a god on Olympus. *He* didn't blush when he talked to a woman. *He* didn't fidget and stand in embarrassed silence, looking at his feet and praying God for a place to hide his clumsy red hands. And he *was* handsome—with the kind of handsomeness that men admire; and as Jim often cried aloud to the blistering silence:

"Why, a man'd be a brute to blame *her*. How was *she* to know that an onery little man like me could suffer an' feel an' never leave off thinkin' of *her*?"

The vision vanished, and Hassayampa Jim turned to scratch the nearest burro between the ears. He was thinking now of Hell's Bend, wondering if within its tortured precincts he would find gold. He needed it so badly, for he was growing old, and with gold he could hire detectives to search out Bill Ward and mark him down against the day of vengeance, before it would be too late. Also he could devote his own time to the search.

Poor old Hassayampa Jim! Forty years had he dreamed of vengeance; forty years had he trudged with misery in sun-light and snow-fall, and he had found no gold to speak of. Only the desert put its haunting mystery into his furtive blue eyes and gave to his brown, tight, excoriated face the color of the country rock, and to his bent figure the fantastic twist of the Joshua tree; his washed-out blue shirt and overalls seemed to fade into the neutrals of the desert like the protective coloring of some hunted creature. He was a desert rat; and with the vague, fluxed, shifting desert unreality of things, he had become a mystic!

Jim smiled a gnome-like smile, a smile at once sage and prescient, as after the lapse of forty years he looked down on the valley below. He knew there were lusty young men there, insolent with newly gotten riches; and beaten old men, still clinging to hope; and cowards and knaves; and little, groveling men; and big men with strong hands and hearts: for Jim had seen many mining camps rise and wane—had seen many men follow the lure of gold through turbulent dramas of love and hate to opulence and power, to ruin and despair.

Night came on slowly. Below, around

the foot of the mesa, the trail lead away into the soft desert twilight. The stars came out one by one, and the hard browns and ochres of the waste were hidden under deepening shadows. Jim watched the lights flare up in the windows of what he judged to be gambling houses, and thoughtfully he clinked some gold pieces in his pocket. The old wild life was calling to him. He wanted to mingle again in the old, glorious, ruinous rout, to live in the past for a night and rub shoulders with his species across a faro lay-out!

He cooked himself a frugal supper and then started stiffly down the slope of the mesa to the camp. An automobile chugged by on the road below, and Jim stopped cautiously, with a hesitant look backward. He had never seen an automobile before. Furtively he found his way down to the crowded main street of the camp.

The Blue Bird strike had made Kelcey's Wells one of the richest camps in the history of the West. The tide had set back from Alaska, and old "sour doughs" and "mushers" crowded the street with young brokers rich overnight—with important mining engineers in shiny puttees and tightly fitting riding breeks, opulent promoters with the beneficent and expansive air of large emprise, big, lumpy-shouldered miners, crooks, gamblers, thieves, oafs, louts, adventurers from every corner of the earth.

Jim smiled his sage little smile as he leaned against one of the uprights of the porch in front of "The Roost" and watched the rabble of fortune hunters surge by. Yes, it was the same rabble he had seen in other camps. There was no change.

But time does not invade the shallow realms of memory. The years had taken much from Hassayampa Jim, but one thing they had not taken, and that was his unalterable decision to kill the man that had despoiled him. A man foretasting murder through bitter years lives only in the moment of the inception of his hate, and Jim was searching the crowd for a face. For forty years, wherever he had seen men gather, he had looked for it, and only death would end his vigil.

"It's Phoebe dice! We pay the line! It's the six-eight. Come on, boys, the



"Why, a man'd be a brute to blame *her*. How was she to know an ornery little man like me could suffer and feel and never leave off thinkin' of her."

boss don't need the money. Roll them bones! It's Big Dick! Well, up jumps the devil!"

The crap dealer in the Louvre shifted the buck—a worn, ivory ring—with white, facile fingers, as he intoned the record of the play. He wore a black sateen shirt with blue elastics on his arms. His spotless white tie was threaded through a carved poker chip; a glossy black "cowlick" was plastered down over his white forehead; a cigarette drooped nonchalantly from his weak mouth, but his eyes were quick and snake-like as he followed the play. A dozen intent faces, some desert-browed and some white with the pallor of the mines, were bent over the table.

A big Swede, a mucker in the Blue Bird, held the dice in his hard fist, crooning softly to them before the breathless instant of their release. Four times he made his point and four times he "let 'er ride." The dealer shot silver dollars across the painted lay-out, doubling the stacks on the line, and the columns in the coin-rack under his hand steadily sank.

"Gangway," roared the bouncer, as he charged through the crowd with a trayful of drinks. The glasses were emptied silently. The play went on. The Swede still held the dice, and a year's savings lay before him on the line.

"Pinch it," whispered a youth who had been staking "two bit" pieces cautiously on the "come." "You've made six points straight. You aint got a chance."

Perspiration stood on the Swede's forehead as he palmed the dice lingeringly; then, with a dip of his brawny arm, he tumbled them out on the table. The dealer's chant was unchanging in its monotone.

"Well, he rolls craps—and up jumps the devil! When he rolls six straight you want to play the 'come.'"

He was refilling the coin rack as a new player stepped into the Swede's place, and the man at his left eagerly seized the dice. The dealer lit a fresh cigarette. The Swede gazed around in a stupid, despairing way, and Hassayampa Jim, standing back in the crowd, smiled again his gnome-like smile. He too had known those big moments with their mocking offset of littleness.

Jim gazed about him. The Louvre was a popular house, and all of the tables were crowded. A long bar ran half the length of the left wall, and three barkeepers worked silently and swiftly. There was an unceasing clamor of loud voices, the rattle of the roulette balls clicking fatefully into their tight little pockets, the restless shuffling of many feet, while from time to time a man with a fife-like voice shrilled the magic word "Keno."

A young man with his immaculate legs encased in white knee hunting boots with silver buckles, strolled in, looking for a place at a table. Jim circled around this young man, eyeing him with a mild, bird-like curiosity. The young man smiled at the old Hassayampa.

"Well, how about you, partner?" he asked kindly.

"I was just wonderin'," Jim replied. "Was you ever in the Red Hussar company? They played at the Bella Union in San Francisco in the seventies, an' they all had boots just like yourn. I was just wonderin'."

The young man smiled pityingly and turned his back on Hassayampa Jim. Jim sighed. He hadn't meant to be rude. He was still thinking of the boots and the Red Hussars when he saw a prospect of a vacant seat at a faro table, and with a smile at once affable and apologetic he sidled furtively but directly to it.

Now in a mining camp it is easy to differentiate between the three gradations of gamblers. Veterans regard crap shooting as an unsafe game. The odds in favor of the house and the danger of loaded dice are too great. Roulette is looked upon with slightly less favor, as the O and O-O place the percentage strongly against the player. In faro, however, by watching the cases carefully and allowing for a slight house percentage on the "splits," one may get an even break. It is at the faro tables that you will find the shrewd old gamblers, playing for hours in silent preoccupation under the unwavering watch of the look-out.

Four men were playing at the table where Jim "sat in," fingering their chips thoughtfully before placing them on the pictured cards before them. A youth at the case-keeper's right was losing steadily. He was a novice. Soon his place was

vacant and Jim Titus slipped onto the stool.

Jim's knowledge of faro extended to the most intimate details of that engrossing game. He played cautiously, coppering or reversing his bets by placing one of the small black markers on his stake. His eyes wavered between the case-keeper, recording the issue of each card from the box with the shift of its corresponding marker on the rack, and the soft, white fingers of the dealer as they slipped the cards through the slit.

For hours Jim sat hunched on the stool, playing the cross numbers and colors, shifting the copper quickly after a glance at the cases, avoiding with unerring shrewdness the deadly "splits." The stack of chips in front of him grew steadily, and the word was quickly passed around the camp that an old desert rat was breaking the bank at the Louvre. A crowd gathered.

But Jim Titus was oblivious to all but the game. Twice he thought he saw the case-keeper, by a lightning shift, record the passing of a card which had not showed in the box. This meant, if he could be sure of it, a "sanded deck." A sanded deck is employed in dealing the old "brace" game of faro. Fine sand is rubbed into the backs of the cards of the "cold deck," which must be substituted by stealth for the one shuffled in sight of the players. When a card shows in the box the dealer knows which card will come next and if heavy bets are on it, he may, by a slight, extra pressure of the finger, slide it through the slit with the card in sight, the sanded spot causing the cards to cohere. The case-keeper must be an accomplice to this deception and must await his opportunity to record on the rack the passage of the hidden card.

It was a flick of the case-keeper's finger that aroused Jim's suspicion.

Several times the dealer replenished the rack from the crap and roulette tables, and the latter games gradually were stopped. The crowd increased, the on-lookers gazing silently over each other's shoulders at the grotesque figure huddled on the stool. Jim saw only the pictured lay-out before him, the markers flipped across the rack and the cards issuing in slow, fateful sequence from the box. The

stack of chips before him grew taller.

Presently the dealer and the look-out, after a consultation, sent for "the boss." He came, elbowing his way through the crowd, and took his place in the dealer's chair. Jim raised his bleached blue eyes slowly and saw a porcine abdomen, hung with two heavy gold chains, bulging into the concavity across the table. He saw merely two puffy white hands dealing the cards. He did not see the gorgeous cravat with the big nugget stick-pin, nor the folds of flesh above it, the sneering mouth and the cold gray eyes with the dark, quivering pouches under them.

Jim spoke once.

"Is the roof off?" he queried mildly.

"The roof is off," replied the boss.

The play went on. At first Jim won; then steadily, if slowly, he lost. The rack showed him the record of the play.

The cards slipped out in threes and Jim's consciousness narrowed down tensely to the play. He caught every flash of the diamond on the boss' finger as it swept rhythmically back and forth across the box—he noted every flip of a colored bead on the cases.

Still Jim lost. Like measured trochaics the cards slipped out in threes, the big diamond pausing as the third card showed. It was always that third card that swept away Jim's stack of blues. Twice he thought he saw the dealer's finger bear just a trifle heavily on the pack and twice he thought he saw the case-keeper shade the rack with his palm. Jim watched—watched with the alertness of a disembodied intelligence stripped down to a consciousness of one thing. Still he lost.

He had ten chips left. There were four cards in the box and the cases showed the queen of spades among them. Jim played his ten chips on it. The king of hearts showed—the five of clubs; then—the finger stiffened as it slipped out the card—

The hunched figure on the stool straightened. A brown, gnarled hand shot across the table and seized the last card.

Under it was the queen of spades!

Hassayampa Jim held up the two cards, and under the light a little sanded spot showed on the back of the five of clubs.

Silence fell upon the house as if the hand of Omnipotence had stilled the babbling tongues. Suddenly there was a light thud as the look-out leaped down from his dais.

"It's a trained deck, boys," he said sheepishly.

Again the silence. The squeak of a miner's boot sounded startlingly. The door opened and from out of the night came the throb of a mine pump. The crowd fell back.

Jim Titus was leaning across the table, and in his hard old hand rested a gun with a long blue barrel. He was about to kill. A fraction of a second and the gambler boss would have sagged, a gory corpse, into the midst of his dishonest winnings, but in that tragic interval Jim Titus stayed his trigger finger as if to appraise his victim. Then, for the first time, he looked into the gray eyes with the dark, quivering pouches under them.

The crowd swayed further back. This was Jim Titus' game, and under the unwritten law of the waste places it was up to him to play his lone hand as he saw fit.

The hand that held the gun trembled ever so slightly; the strange, twisted little man leaned farther across the table; and for ten seconds, that seemed to measure the lapse of æons, Hassayampa Jim gazed into the boss' craven soul. Jim's lips moved under the white, rat-bristle mustache, but no words came forth.

In tragic moments, ghosts of dead selves come from their hidden crypts—deep sublimates of life put away that we may forget their poignancy. To Jim Titus they came in legion now, like the rushing of many wings. Something blurred his old eyes; the walls of the Louvre fell away; and through the mirage of his bitter years Jim Titus saw Bill Ward and himself kneeling beside the Hassayampa, scraping the green scum from the surface and thanking God for his great mercy. And there was the What Cheer House, and the girl, and the old tang of life, with all its blatant little hopes and fears. It came with oddly detached wisps and wraiths of memory—faces, voices, a bit of an old song and the ghost of an odor of—frangipani. Then came the grim processional of nights and days, through forty years,

like phantoms whispering of death—and then the smouldering hate.

There is a deep determination in the lives of men which leaves the issue of their deeds to their warring selves. Jim's hatred had walked with him in the waste and whispered to him of vengeance; yet, with his enemy before him now, his hand was stayed. For what Jim Titus, mystic, saw before him now was not the cringing, swinish hulk of the crooked boss, but a young man, big, brave, handsome and debonair—the once loved old "pardner" of his youth.

Hassayampa Jim's hard old hand trembled with the pitiful tremble of the aged when grief assails them. He gazed upon Bill Ward benignly and pityingly, as one who looks behind the veil and knows the littleness of men and the puissance of God. He could not kill. He had shared adventure and misery with this man, and once upon a time he had loved him as a brother. A big tear stole down his seamed old face and splashed onto his last stack of blues.

"Oh, Bill, Bill," he breathed, "you poor, poor devil! The world has sure used you rough, old pardner."

A sob choked him. He could not bear to gaze upon this ruin of what had once been a man. The eyes, with the unhealthy pouches under them, the great flabby abdomen, the white, womanish hands, supple and agile despite the sixty odd years of their owner, the terror that lurked in this lost soul that had once faced death smiling—all these things were too terrible for Jim Titus.

"You don't look young no more, Bill," he quavered sadly. "I'm sorry, Bill. I'm so sorry. The world has sure used you rough."

He dashed his trembling hand across his eyes and turned to go, but the crowd barred his egress. They had waited for their killing and blood had not been forthcoming. There was a low murmur, ending in a growl.

"What'dye know about that ancient four-flusher," taunted a teamster. "A man robs him of a fortune; he finds it out, pulls his hardware an' then aint got the spunk to squeeze it."

"So much the better," a voice replied. "Let's lynch the skunk."



Jim Titus was leaning across the table, and in his hard old hand rested a gun with a long blue barrel. He was about to kill.

The boss still sat rigidly in his chair. He had not spoken once. But as the affirmative roar of the crowd seconded the proposal to lynch him, he wilted visibly. The crowd surged forward.

"Kill him! Hang him to the derrick at the Blue Bird. Somebody get a rope—"

It was the big Swede, the mucker from the Blue Bird, who had slipped naturally enough into the job of mob leader. He rushed forward and struck Bill Ward a terrible blow across the mouth. As he drew back his arm to repeat the blow, Jim Titus tapped him between the eyes with the butt of his long gun and the Swede slipped from view under the table. With surprising agility, the old prospect or whirled, and the long barrel of his gun swept through a menacing arc. His left hand dropped to his hip and a second gun flashed side by side with the first.

An awe-stricken voice in the crowd murmured audibly:

"He's a two-gun man!"

In a voice harsh and dissonant, like the speech of some withered little goblin suddenly given tongue, Jim spoke:

"Who-all's a-goin' to do this hangin'?"

From the silence it appeared that nobody was. Jim's little, baleful eyes swept the crowd disdainfully; his lip lifted in a sneer and a yellow, tobacco-stained fang

of a tooth showed under his rat-bristle.

An observer standing on the *mal-pais* ridge two hours later might have seen an odd little man urging two burros down through a defile in the rocks. If he had listened intently he might have heard the little old man singing an odd little song, as he trudged along. It ran something like this:

I looked so fine a-walkin' on the
promenade to-day
I had t' take the dogs with me t'
keep the gals away.

Thus passed Hassayamp. Jim, Desert Rat, with his burros, out of Kelcey's Wells. Smaller and smaller the trio grew as they slipped out across the expanse of harsh, burnt sienna, seeming to reach its wide and encompassing arms out to the very gates of infinity, where the dawn-light flooded the sky. Like tiny motes they swam in the effulgence of light, flickered a moment—and were gone.

Jim Titus had returned to his world of elemental things, to the sunrises and sunsets, the silence and the suffering, the woodsmoke and the aroma of sage, and in his unsullied old heart there was the peace that passeth understanding.





The LITTLE GRAY MOUSE

By Kennett Harris

Author of "Managing Raimond," etc



LONZO SAWYER leaned over the counter that ran at right angles to the employment agency manager's desk and scooped his hand behind his ear, so that no sound vibrations from that prematurely bald, keen-eyed, large-nosed gentleman should escape him.

"Pardon me, but did I hear you aright?" he asked.

"Five dollars," repeated the employment agency manager.

"Ah!" Sawyer breathed, with an air of relief. "I was afraid I was hearing strange noises. Five dollars is what I understood you to say, but the seeming discrepancy between that statement and your advertisement puzzled me. 'No charge unless placed,' isn't it?"

"We'll place you, if we take your application," the manager replied, confidently. "Five dollars is the registration fee. After that, all you'll have to pay is a small percentage of your salary for the first two months."

"That seems very reasonable," said Sawyer, with an agreeable smile. "And the small percentage is—"

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BY
WILL GREFE

"Twenty-five per cent."

The applicant received the information unmoved. "At a cursory and casual glance, that might seem a trifle altitudinous, not to say precipitous," he said. "However—here's your five-spot. Now let's see what you've got."

The employment agency manager took the bill, dropped it into a till in a drawer of his desk, and looked at Sawyer with a more particular attention. He saw a well set-up young man with red hair, a wide, humorous mouth, gray-blue eyes that twinkled, and a square, firm chin. Beneath one of the gray-blue eyes was a slight discoloration of the skin, barely perceptible, but unmistakable, once detected.

"What sort of a job do you want?" asked the manager.

"How about a nice little vice-presidency of something juicy and nutritious, where the duties are not too onerous?" inquired Sawyer. "I've had some experience vice-presiding in a debating club."

The manager leveled his pen at the red-headed young man. "My friend," he

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said, coldly, "this is a business office and I'm talking business. You keep that in mind and cut out the funny stuff, will you? What was your last job?"

"I blush to tell you," replied Alonzo. "It was collecting overdue accounts from people who couldn't pay them. I don't want any more of that. I incline to the opinion that I would be a success as a salesman. I notice that you have vacancies for traveling salesmen."

"For the city, yes," assented the manager, pulling toward him a book like a hotel register. "Name, age, address, and name and address of last employer?"

Sawyer gave him all but the last. "We had a slight difference at the time I severed my connection and I'm afraid that he wouldn't say anything of a helpful nature concerning me," he explained.

"The job before that?" asked the manager, briskly.

"It was my first adventure in the world of commerce," Sawyer answered.

The manager wrote "No experience" in the register. "Call to-morrow morning and I'll have something for you," he said.

"I'll be here," declared Alonzo. "Good morning."

He was grinning as he went out into the corridor. A young woman who was leaving the elevator blushed slightly as she received the full radiance of his expression, and hurried past him with an uncertain half bow. Sawyer lifted his hat, the grin fading as he did so, and then turned to watch the trim little figure enter the door from which he had just emerged.

"Great Gramper!" he ejaculated. "It's the Little Gray Mouse. Now, what the devil do you suppose she's doing in that gallery? She couldn't—"

The descending elevator interrupted his speculations. Outside, Sawyer violated his delicacy of feeling so far as to take from his waistcoat pocket the employment agency's advertisement and examine it with a new interest. He found therein announced vacancies for eight lady cashiers, five companions and secretaries, fourteen stenographers, six multigraph operators, five inspectresses

and seven timekeepers, besides housekeepers, garment workers and stock girls, which he put out of the question.

"She wouldn't make a bad companion when she got thawed out a little," Sawyer concluded. "Well, it's none of my business, and now that my position in life is assured, I think I shall be justified in blowing myself to a business man's lunch."

Before indulging in this extravagance, Sawyer turned into the vestibule of a large office building and went directly to the cigar stand, whose proprietor greeted him with the faint relaxation of his serious countenance that he occasionally allowed himself in welcome of an exceptional customer. At the same time, he placed two open boxes of cigars on the showcase.

"Not for me, Neddie," said Alonzo, shaking his head. "That sort of recklessness was all right in my days of irresponsible affluence or care-free impetuosity, but things have changed since Willie died. You see me now a man with a steady job and a fixed income. I'm not sure of the amount of it, but it's fixed all right. The six-per brand, please, Neddie."

The cigar man imperturbably replaced his two boxes and produced a third, from which Sawyer took his stipulated half dozen of cigars, laying down a quarter in payment therefor.

"Having concluded our more or less sordid business of barter and sale," Sawyer continued, "I want you to consider me in the light of a friend or younger brother. I want a dab of the right dope on the Snider City and Interstate Employment Agency. How about it, Neddie?"

"Skin," replied Neddie, at a venture.

"I was afraid so," sighed Alonzo. "I'm probably skun, but I want the job and I figure that I can scrape along on the seventy-five a week they leave me."

"Collecting?" inquired the cigar man.

"Distributing," replied Sawyer.

"It's easier on the eyes," said the cigar man, meaningly.

"A raw beefsteak poultice works wonders," Alonzo remarked. "Think I could sell goods?"

"If you made the price and the terms right and the fellow happened to want the goods," replied the cigar man. "But why don't you go back to your folks and tell 'em you're sorry?"

"I'm going to," declared Sawyer, "only I'm going to roll up a bundle of the higher denominations first. One question more: If you had informally met a young female person—say at your boarding house—a quiet little frightened mouse of a person, you understand, who looked as if she couldn't use her hatpin for anything but pinning on her hat—and you had reason to suspect a gang of designs on her handbag, would you stand idly by or would you put down your head and horn in? I've nobody to advise me but you, Neddie."

"If you ask me, I'd say, don't by no means stand idly by," answered the cigar man. "The fellow that does that is liable to get pinched on suspicion while the stick-ups are making their get-away. And I wouldn't butt in on general principles. I'd beat it before the trouble began, especially if it was a skirt."

"I guess that's good advice," remarked Sawyer. "It sounds like it because it's hard to take. I fear me, Neddie, that the presumable spark of chivalry in your bosom hasn't got life enough to light a dry stogie. But I'll bet it's good advice at that."

Contrary to his usual custom, Sawyer returned to his walking-distance Michigan Avenue boarding house early in the afternoon, encountering nobody but Henry, the colored boy, whose red-banded forage cap and buttons gave a touch of splendor to the establishment highly appreciated by the refined. Proceeding to his bedroom, he made a brief toilet and then seated himself close to his open door, lighted one of the cigars and smoked with an attentive ear turned to the staircase. Four times he heard the street door open and close, and as often he jumped up and tripped lightly down the stairs to meet on one of the landings some fellow-boarder in whom he was totally uninterested. The fifth time he was more fortunate.

She was wearing a fuzzy gray beaver

hat, beneath which her almost flaxen hair fluffed against the wide brim, making her small, delicate features seem smaller and even more delicate. Her mouth had a pathetic little droop; her complexion was clear but pale, and the gray eyes that she lifted to the young man, who was politely flattening himself against the wall, had an oddly luminous quality that was not unattractive. She smiled at Sawyer, a timid, perfunctory little smile, and bowed in acknowledgment of the flattening. Sawyer smiled in return, but there was nothing perfunctory about it. It was the expression of a friendly and cheerful spirit, well pleased with the object in its view.

"Good afternoon, Miss Jones," said he.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Sawyer," she returned, and as his attitude seemed to expect it, she paused.

"Er— You're not going to the ball game?" asked Alonzo.

"Good gracious, no," she replied, with some astonishment.

Sawyer looked immensely relieved. "Fine!" he commented. "Then there won't be anything in the world to prevent you from coming down to the parlor to talk to me after little. I'm lonesome."

She looked at him in amazement.

"Honest," said Sawyer, his blue eyes twinkling persuasively.

"I think you must be—or something," declared Miss Jones. "Very well, then. In about ten minutes."

"Thanks," said Alonzo. "I'll go on down and be studying the sacred ibises."

He descended to the parlor, a large and gloomy apartment with funeral hangings. At one side of the ornate Italian marble mantelpiece was a fire screen embroidered with the sacred ibises to which Sawyer had referred. The young man was engaged in earnest contemplation of these ornithological marvels when Miss Jones came in—exactly twenty minutes after the appointed time.

"This is awfully good of you, Miss Jones," said Sawyer, gratefully, as he placed a chair for her and, at a respectful distance, another for himself.



Miss Jones came in—exactly twenty minutes after the appointed time.

"I know it is," the young woman agreed, with a coolness that rather surprised Alonzo. "I had a good mind to reconsider."

"Don't call it a good mind," remonstrated the young man.

"It wasn't good," assented Miss Jones. "A good mind doesn't wobble. What do you want me to talk to you about?"

"That was a base pretext," Sawyer confessed. "Really and truly, I wanted to talk to you about myself, of course. It's my favorite topic of conversation."

Alonzo laughed and then became intensely serious. "To tell some more of the truth," he said. "It occurred to me that you might be able to help me out. I'm a stranger, you know, and you, presumably knowing the city like a guide book and being well acquainted—"

"I think you would better consult the guide book, Mr. Sawyer," interrupted Miss Jones, gently. "You see, I've been here less than two weeks. I am from Wisconsin."

"Sure!" said Alonzo. "Fool that I was! You're a Madison girl. You probably know my cousin Edith; Edith Crosby, class 1911. Edith—"

Again he was interrupted. Miss Jones had been shaking her head at him. "I'm a McPheeter's girl, class of 1912, stenography and typewriting," she informed him. "Like to hear our yell?" She chanted softly:

"Clickety click, clickety click,
Slam, bam, jam,
Upper case, lower case,
Single space, double space,
'Rah! 'Rah! 'Rah!
McPheeter's!"

"It's a lulurino," exclaimed Alonzo, enthusiastically, "and I'll bet you invented it."

Miss Jones blushed with the true modesty of an author.

"Now I'm going to tell you something that will surprise you," Sawyer announced. "Hold on to your breath tight, please. Ready? Well, when I had the pleasure of meeting you this morning, I had been actually in search of

employment, looking for a job, you understand."

"So was I," said Miss Jones, with a widening of her gray eyes. "Strange as it may appear, I have been looking for one for nearly two weeks."

"Well, if this isn't fate, I don't want a cent," Sawyer exclaimed. "The Snider City and Interstate promised me something to-morrow morning."

"They are going to place me to-morrow afternoon," said the young woman, laughing. "It is odd, isn't it?"

"It's the most remarkable thing I ever heard of," Alonzo declared, "and all they charged me was five dollars down and a fourth of my salary for four weeks. How do you suppose they manage to live and keep up office expenses?"

"I thought it was a good deal to charge," said Miss Jones. "Still, when one doesn't seem to be able to get anything to do by oneself—"

"Well, we'll see," smiled Sawyer. "I'll make a point of telling you how I get along. We'll compare notes—what?"

"So far, so good," Alonzo remarked to the ibises when Miss Jones had left him. "Now if my shiny-roofed friend at the office doesn't give that little lady a show for her white alley, I'll be in a position to butt in with perfect propriety."

Mr. Snider, the employment agent to whose glossy apex Sawyer disrespectfully alluded, seemed nevertheless as good as his word. After a quick glance of recognition, which passed from his keen eyes through his eyeglasses and down his big nose at an acute angle from his back-tilted head, he took two slips of paper from a pigeon hole and handed one to Mr. Sawyer with a request for his signature. The document was an agreement to pay to the agency a stipulated twenty-five per cent for the period before mentioned, and the young man set his flourishing autograph to it without hesitation. Thereupon the manager passed over the second slip, which bore the inscription: "Mr. Bantry; Klem, Buller & Co., — Franklin Street, nine A. M."

"You've just ten minutes to get

there," said Mr. Snider, focusing the clock as he spoke.

"Thanks tremendously," returned Sawyer, "but before I go, would it be out of place to inquire what compensation, remuneration, or in other words, wages goes with this?"

"You'll settle that with Mr. Bantry," said the manager. "They'll probably start you in at fifteen a week, but of course you can work up."

"Is it a sausage manufactory, or a—"

"Wholesale stationers," snapped the manager. "They happen to have a vacancy for a city salesman. You'll be in luck if you get the job—which you won't if—"

He stopped in the manner of one who is about to say something unpleasant and thinks better of it. Sawyer was leaning well over the counter and looking interested.

"Yes?" Alonzo said, softly.

"—if you don't make a good impression," concluded Mr. Snider.

"That's one of the very best things I do," Alonzo declared, "and the easiest. The trouble is living up to the impression I make."

With this farewell, he left the office and proceeded directly to the address that had been given to him. He found Klem, Buller & Co., an establishment of some pretension, occupying the entire second floor of a considerable building.

Mr. Bantry was writing, and before he stopped the applicant had a couple of minutes to look him over. Having done so, Alonzo concluded that he did not like Mr. Bantry, basing his objections mainly on the neatly trimmed black whiskers that decorated that gentleman's lank cheeks to the level of his ear lobes. Nevertheless, the young man waited with exemplary patience, not even breaking the silence by a respectful cough!

Mr. Bantry looked up. He had highly arched eyebrows, a forehead that denoted intelligence, thin lips and an irreproachable necktie. He was spare and dapper. He smiled, and Sawyer liked him still less.

"You are looking for a position as salesman, I understand," said Mr. Ban-

try, in a high-throated voice that seemed to match his eyebrows.

"That's my present occupation, sir," replied Alonzo.

The eyebrows went up a shade higher. "Do you mean that you are employed at present?"

"Only in looking for employment."

"I see." He took some letters from a wire basket, turned them over with long, slim, swiftly moving fingers and picked one out and read it.

"No previous experience, I understand."

"Not in stationery," Sawyer answered.

"In anything else?"

"I've sold more or less personal property—of my own," Sawyer explained. "I didn't find it difficult and I've been informed that if the goods, prices and terms are satisfactory, customers naturally and logically follow."

"College man?"

"Holyash, 1911."

"Well, your theory of the art of salesmanship will probably require some modification and you may find that you have something to learn; still, I'm inclined to give you a trial. You'll start in at fifteen dollars a week, which you probably won't earn for some weeks. Advancement with us is governed by merit."

Mr. Bantry pressed a button on his desk. A boy appeared.

"Ask Mr. Wagstaff to come here," directed Mr. Bantry. He resumed his writing and in a moment or two, a tall, bony, bleached-out, elderly man entered, rubbing his chin and peering short-sightedly before him.

"Mr. Wagstaff," said Mr. Bantry, "you told me you had a vacancy for a city salesman. Here he is: Mr. Sawyer. He hasn't had any experience but he's anxious to learn, and he's energetic and dependable, according to the recommendation I've had regarding him. You might take him and start him in at once."

The tall man nodded, and turning to Sawyer, repeated the nod. "Come along," he invited, and stalked through the door without looking back. Sawyer followed

him down the little passage, out into the office and to the other end of the big room which was devoted to stock. Half-way down they encountered a red-faced young fellow in a drab raincoat who seemed to be in a state of some excitement. Mr. Wagstaff attempted unsuccessfully to pass him.

"I thought you'd gone, Spofford," said Mr. Wagstaff, with an air of remonstrance. "You know this aint going to do any good. Why don't you go?"

"Oh, I'm going," retorted the young man. "All I want to know is why I'm fired. What have I done? Aint I made good? You tell me now. Give me a reason."

"I've given you all the reason I'm going to," replied Mr. Wagstaff. "You're foolish trying to make a fuss. Go talk to Mr. Bantry if you're bound to have trouble. Don't talk to me."

"Talk to the dickens!" said the young man, with heat. "Well, it's all right, but I bet you'll give me a good recommendation when I want it. There's going to be trouble if you don't."

He went off muttering angrily and Mr. Wagstaff conducted Sawyer to a desk where he began at once to initiate him into the mysteries of the stock. He was lucid and patient, and as Sawyer was quick and intelligent much was accomplished by the lunch hour. After lunch, Mr. Wagstaff turned him over to a subordinate and the afternoon was spent in further instruction.

"Well," ruminated Alonzo, as he wended his way homeward. "It seems a nice, clean, cream-laid sort of a business. There's just one problem confronting me: how to live luxuriously and dress stylishly on eleven twenty-five a week."

He saw Miss Jones at dinner and she made him a little prim bow which he returned by an inclination of profound gravity. After dinner he went to the parlor and sat hopefully through half an hour's more or less musical performance by a statuesque and deep-bosomed brunette (employed) whose voice was the admiration of a large circle of her friends. At the end of that time, he heaved a sigh of regret and went up to

his room to study his price lists. At breakfast the next morning, Miss Jones arose from the table the moment after he had entered, but her smile and nod were more cordial.

"Well," mused Sawyer, "I suppose she's got something or she wouldn't look so pleased or be in such a hurry to leave one perfectly good buckwheat cake in a pool of syrup. She'll confess all to-night if I don't act too anxious."

He disposed of his oatmeal, bacon, eggs and cakes with a good appetite and remarkable dispatch, and then set out for Klem-Buller's at a pace that brought him to their door on the stroke of the half hour. He was again turned over to his instructor of the previous afternoon, with whom he was so occupied that when their peregrinations led them to the barrier dividing the office from the stock, he hardly glanced at the office force. Offices never attracted him much anyway.

"That's a new one, the one in the purple dress," remarked the instructor, catching the tail end of the glance. "Little pippin, if you ask me. She's pipin' us off, too."

Sawyer looked with more particularity and encountered a flash from the gray eyes of Miss Jones, who was seated at a typewriter desk five yards away and operating the machine with a rapidity and delicacy of touch that reflected immense credit on the McPheetter's Business College.

"Excuse me a moment or two, or maybe more," said Alonzo to the instructor, and without waiting for that young man's assent, he walked briskly to the railing, opened the wicket and advanced to Miss Jones' desk with a beaming face.

"This is indeed a treat," he said, energetically shaking the hand that she was too confused to withhold. "How long have you been here?"

"Since yesterday afternoon," replied Miss Jones, smiling nervously. "But really, you mustn't speak to me here, please. Everybody's looking at you."

"Too bad," said Sawyer. "Well, I suppose that means we'll have to wait till lunch time."

"No, indeed," she protested.

"Until we walk home together?"

"I'd rather not—please."

"Then we'll have to fall back on the parlor after dinner," said Sawyer. "Shall we say parlor?"

"Very well then," conceded Miss Jones. "But please go. Mr. Bantry is coming out of his office and conversation is against the rules."

"Farewell then," said Alonzo. He turned and with sober dignity walked back to the stockman, and for the rest of the day appeared entirely oblivious of Miss Jones' existence. Furthermore, he chose his own route home, and at the dinner table hardly lifted his eyes from his plate beyond what was necessary to assure himself of his protégée's presence. He lingered for several minutes after she had left the dining room, and then going into the parlor, he found her there sitting a little apart from the other occupants of the room and turning the leaves of a three-year-old magazine. As he entered, she looked up with the timid, deprecating air that had first attracted his attention and aroused his chivalric impulses.

"I hope I didn't offend you this morning," she said, as Sawyer seated himself beside her. "You know," she added pathetically, "it's so hard to get a position and so easy to do some little thing that may make one lose it."

"I know," replied Sawyer, seriously. "I acted like a first-class chump and I want to apologize. I feel like kicking myself. My only excuse is that I mean well most of the time, and you know how much of an excuse that is. Honest, I'm sorry."

"I know I must have seemed snippy," said Miss Jones. "I didn't mean to be and it certainly was funny that we should both have been sent to the same place."

"Think you'll like it?" asked Alonzo.

"I feel sure that I shall," she replied.

"If they'll only like me."

"Make your mind perfectly easy," Alonzo told her. "Advancement goes by merit there, and consequently, I expect to be in a position to assure you of a steady job as long as you want it. There

may be some persons not unconnected with whiskers whose services I may dispense with, but you won't feel the shake-up in the least when I take hold."

Miss Jones laughed. "That's a comfort to know," she said.

There was an interruption here by a girl with a top-heavy coiffure and a not altogether commendable economy of petticoats who insisted that Mr. Sawyer was musical and had a beautiful baritone voice. Mr. Sawyer modestly denied the soft impeachment so far as the voice was concerned, but admitted a fondness for the key bugle, which he offered to play if anybody happened to have such an instrument handy.

Another young woman thereupon expressed her conviction that he knew college songs, which she professed to be perfectly crazy about, and with that there was a general swishing of skirts in the direction of the group and a babble of beguiling voices that put an end to any hope of further private conversation.

Five minutes later Alonzo was seated at the piano, pounding out rhythmic chords with a fine muscular forearm movement, while a shrill chorus blended, to a certain extent, with his "beautiful baritone" in the announcement that there was a tavern.

Miss Jones unobtrusively left the room at the end of the first verse. Out of the tail of his eye Alonzo saw her go. He was disappointed, entertaining in secret a rather good opinion of his own vocal accomplishment. Yet he could hardly find it in his heart to blame her.

"She's not in the same class with that bunch," he said to himself, as he unlaced his shoes that night. "Some little lady, she is." He recalled her shy, half-apprehensive look, and shook his head pityingly. "She certainly needs somebody to look after her," his thoughts ran on. "Poor little thing! Scared to death she won't keep that job of hers, and yet when you talk to her, you get the idea that somehow she isn't as scared as she looks."

In fine, Miss Jones had Mr. Sawyer in that state of uncertainty that is vulgarly called "guessing." It is a danger-



"This is indeed a treat," he said, energetically shaking her hand. "How long have you been heré?"

ous condition of mind, usually. Still, Alonzo was convinced that his interest was altogether of the elder brotherly sort.

"Odd looking eyes," was his final reflection, "but nice eyes."

A surprise awaited him at Klem-Buller's the next morning. On his arrival, Mr. Wagstaff beckoned him to his desk. "Mr. Sawyer," said he, rubbing his chin with his large, bony hand, as was his habit, and looking beyond the person he addressed, as was also his manner, "I'm going to send you out sooner than I—er—expected. This afternoon, in fact, and this morning we'll give you your territory and go over a list of customers. Oh, Mr. Corry!"

He beckoned to the instructor, who hurried up.

"Mr. Sawyer's going to take Greenway's territory this afternoon," he explained. "You show him what it is and give him all the pointers you can about the trade." He nodded dismissal.

"This is so sudden," remarked Sawyer to the instructor. "Prithee tell me why this abruptness."

"Greenway's bounced," replied Corry. "Got to represent in that section and I've told Old Bones that you were about ready anyway. Well, I hope you'll stick."

"Thanks," returned Sawyer. "What was the matter with Greenway?"

"Search me," Corry answered. "Seemed like he was doing pretty well for a new man. Maybe he got gay, or something. Now here's what you've got."

And so Alonzo was fairly launched. It's only fair to him to say that he went about his new business with zeal, energy and patience, subduing his natural levity to a remarkable degree and cultivating a diplomatic manner foreign to his nature, which was decidedly frank. As a result, he began to bring in orders—with the pride of a spaniel puppy retrieving a stick—and altogether prospects seemed bright.

There was one fly in the flattering unction that he applied to his soul—Mr. Bantry. He met Mr. Bantry occa-

sionally and Mr. Bantry looked upon him darkly and sidewise. He discovered that Mr. Bantry, nominally a mere department manager, had growing power and authority in all departments, that Mr. Klem was as good as retired and that Mr. Buller was getting childish and leaned on Bantry more and more, although he was reported to dislike him quite heartily and had opposed a raise of salary that the competent junior had asked for. That was office talk.

"Still," thought Sawyer, "he may take a notion to shave off those side-winders some day and I may learn to like him. Anyway, he's business and he'll realize that he's got to treat me well to keep me."

Against this theory of enlightened selfishness, Sawyer learned from Corry and others that Mr. Bantry was hard to please and exercised his authority to fire and hire most freely. He fired, so said Corry, because he didn't approve of the way a man parted his hair.

And at the boarding house one evening, Miss Jones informed him that Miss Wilkinson, one of the three stenographers, had been dismissed.

"What was the charge?" asked Sawyer.

"I don't know, but I think she displeased Mr. Bantry," replied Miss Jones.

"You know what I think of Mr. Bantry?" asked Alonzo.

"No," answered Miss Jones.

"You never will," said Sawyer. "There are things that would be unfit for your young ears to hear."

Miss Jones uttered the nearest approach to a giggle that she ever permitted herself. "I don't think he's so bad," she observed.

"What!" ejaculated Sawyer. He looked at her sorrowfully. "Child, you grieve me," he said.

"You know we have to take people as we find them," she urged.

"True," admitted Alonzo, reflectively.

He left her that evening in an unusually thoughtful frame of mind. There was something extraordinarily appealing about the girl, and something baffling. She had her reservations, many

of them, and they were not to be invaded even by a young man of Mr. Sawyer's adventurous and daring spirit. Perhaps if her eyes had been a shade less luminous and the lashes that shaded them not quite so long and sweeping in her moments of timidity, Alonzo would have abandoned the attempt. As it was, he continued to guess.

At Klem, Buller & Company's, new clerks came and went, old salesmen dropped out and new bobbed up, but though Mr. Bantry continued to look darkly and sidewise at Sawyer, the young man remained as he had predicted, by virtue of his increasing efficiency a person respected and well treated. At times, Sawyer persuaded himself that Wagstaff was taking a fancy to him. Twice within the month the town sales manager had told the new man that his work was not half bad.

Then came a week when Sawyer remitted his last three-dollar-and-seventy-five cents to the Snider agency and felt his chest expand in a sense of freedom. He was his own man now. It was his own job, with no strings, trammels, liens, encumbrances, multures, tithes or any other hold-out whatsoever. He went to his work the ensuing week with renewed energy and gratifying results in the shape of orders, and at the week's end, grinned happily as he opened the envelope that contained his full fifteen dollars of pay.

Then the grin slowly faded and the young man's face became set in an expression entirely serious as he contemplated a printed slip of paper pinned to the bills. The matter of the slip was brief. It informed Mr. Sawyer that Klem, Buller & Co. would from that day dispense with his services.

A minute later Sawyer was at Mr. Wagstaff's desk holding out the slip for his inspection.

"Would you mind explaining this?" he asked. "Of course I understand what it means, but why do I get it?"

Wagstaff rubbed his chin and looked afar. "I don't think I could give you any explanation that would be satisfactory to you, Sawyer," he replied not

unkindly. "I will say, however, that I am sorry to see you go and that I hoped we might keep you."

"Oh, I don't want any satisfactory explanation," said Sawyer, smiling unpleasantly. "Most any little old explanation will do. I supposed I was getting along pretty well, thank you—about as well as could be expected, in other words."

"You have," declared the town sales manager, emphatically.

"What's the answer?" Sawyer demanded.

"See here," said Wagstaff, suddenly, and with a surprising degree of heat. "If you want to know why you're fired, you go to that wolf-whelp and ask him. Tell him I sent you, if you like." He was looking directly at Sawyer now, and his usually lack-luster eyes were blazing and his big bony fist was clenched upon his desk.

"All right," said Sawyer, curtly. "Thanks."

He was turning away when Wagstaff caught him by the arm. "Wait a moment," he said. "Better not, after all." He paused and seemed to struggle with himself. "No use making a fuss," he continued. "You will only hurt yourself and you won't do him any harm."

"I don't know about that," said the young man, grimly. "I think I can make a hospital case of him."

"Don't be foolish," said Wagstaff. "That sort of thing doesn't do. I want to write you a letter giving you a good send-off, and I can't do it if you kick the kettle over. Think a moment."

Sawyer thought. "Why do you suppose he does it?" he asked. "What's your guess?"

"I'm not guessing," replied Wagstaff. "Some of these days, though, I'll be sure. Are you going to be sensible?"

"Just for the novelty of the thing, I believe I will," said Sawyer. "Mail that letter to me, won't you? Good-by."

He shook hands and walked out without permitting himself so much as a glance at the office. Raging inwardly and regretting profoundly his sensible behavior, he walked up one street and down another quite aimlessly, until he

found himself in a familiar locality near the entrance of a large office building, into which he turned, after a moment's hesitation, making his way to the cigar stand. He greeted the proprietor pleasantly by the name of "Neddie," and took six cigars from the box that was offered to him.

"How are they coming?" asked the cigar man.

"In hearses," replied Alonzo, as he lighted one of the six and bestowed the rest in his waistcoat pockets. "They're coming slowly and sadly, and the band is playing a dead march. Could I trouble you to give me a few matches and some good advice?"

"There's your matches," said Neddie, generously throwing a small box on the showcase. "Now what's the difficulty?"

"Suppose you were once more heartlessly thrown on the cold world, that your high hopes had been dashed and double crossed, and you felt down and out."

"Busted?" inquired the cigar man.

"Not exactly," replied Sawyer.

"Boarding?"

Sawyer nodded.

"I'll tell you," said the cigar man.

"If you've got as much as five dollars, you go and blow four seventy-five of it in a good restaurant. Get a man's size porterhouse, with mushrooms, a stein of light brew, a chunk of Roquefort and a demi-tassy. Then forget those ropes you've got in your breast pocket and have the waiter bring you a good Havana. Lean back and think over the situation and you'll think about it right. It won't be a piker's point of view. You've been up against the dairy lunch game lately. That's what's the matter with you."

Sawyer looked at him admiringly and departed without another word, feeling that he now had a definite and agreeable course of action to pursue. He proceeded briskly along the street until he arrived at the establishment he had in mind—a sufficiently expensive place with subdued lights, *Wein-Weib-und-Gesang* mottoes in mural fresco, and boxed retreats in dull oak to afford its patrons a semi-privacy at their repasts. At the

entrance, a waiter of obviously Teutonic extraction uttered an exclamation of surprise and beamed all over his large flat face.

"Misder Sawyer!" he cried. "Vell, vell!"

"None other," returned Alonzo. "How are you, Owgoost? Can you give me something to eat—steak with mushrooms, for instance, with a stein of light brew and a chunk of Roquefort. Think you can manage it, Owgoost?"

"If you want elegant dail soup und chiraffe cutlets mit bigeon milk cheese, I can manage it for you, Misder Sawyer," Owgoost answered heartily. "Leaf it to me. Komm—"

He was starting off when Sawyer laid a hand on his arm and held him back, at the same time regarding earnestly one of the occupants of a box a short distance away—a dapper man of uncertain age, with neatly trimmed black whiskers that extended to the level of his ear lobes. Motioning the head waiter to silence, Sawyer took his arm and using him as a screen, walked him to a better angle of observation.

The dapper man was Mr. Bantry, and his *vis-à-vis* was a large-nosed, prematurely bald person, with glistening eye glasses, whom Sawyer recognized as Mr. Snider, of the employment agency. They had finished their luncheon and were apparently discussing something of particular interest. Sawyer walked Owgoost back without attracting their notice. "Get that steak started," he whispered. Then he walked quietly to the compartment next to the two men and deliberately and shamelessly listened.

"Nothing doing, Freddie," Snider was saying.

"I'm tired of hearing you say that," rejoined Mr. Bantry, fretfully.

"Then don't ask me what aint reasonable," said the employment agency man. "I'm entitled to my bit, aint I?"

"Have I said you aren't? You could split the registration fee anyway. Listen here. I'm taking risks, and this changing about and breaking in new people means extra work. I've got to make things go fairly smooth and it keeps me awake

nights scheming how to do it. Well, I want more out of it than I am getting."

"So do I," responded Snider. "We all do, and there isn't much in this office graft anyway. If it wasn't for the labor end of the game, I'd quit the business."

"All the same, you'll split the registration fee," asserted Bantry.

Sawyer got up very gently and edged out of his box. His neighbors were leaning across the table about twelve inches apart. Suddenly and most violently their heads met, urged to a concussion by a powerful hand on the nape of each of their necks. It was a most brutal thing, but as neatly done as need be.

"Keep your seats, gentlemen," said Sawyer sharply, as the two, half-dazed, struggled to their feet.

"Waiter!" shouted Bantry.

Sawyer's open hand struck his late superior's narrow chest and the terror of Klem-Buller's crumpled back in the cushioned corner. The employment agency man sat down without assistance, just as Owgoost and two of his underlings hurried up.

"Private business, Owgoost," said Sawyer, without looking around. "Beat it! Wait a minute. Bring me a chair."

"What in—" The agent stopped as Sawyer dexterously flourished a half empty water bottle within an inch of his nose.

"You speak when your turn comes, and that's when I get through," said Alonzo. "Thank you, Owgoost. Now, keep away."

He seated himself on the chair that the waiter had obsequiously placed at the end of the table. "Now," he resumed, his blue eyes sparkling frostily as he looked from one to the other. "To begin with, don't you think you're a nice, sweet-scented pair of grafters? Wouldn't you give a tannery pup an attack of nausea? Well, waiving that question, I'd like to know if you realize that I've got you with the goods. You can answer that if you like."

"I—I don't know what you mean," stammered Bantry.

"Don't tell me that," said Sawyer, "because I want to discuss this matter amicably, and it makes me want to set

a lighted match to your whiskers. You know what I mean, and so does your friend."

"What have you got on us?" asked the friend, trying to speak calmly.

"Two large-sized red bumps so far," Alonzo snarled. "There's no telling what else there may be if you don't behave." He turned to Bantry. "I've got Spofford's address," he continued, mendaciously, "and Greenway's, and Young's and Jolliffe's and a few others. I've a notion that there are some men, of Mr. Wagstaff's standing, for instance, who might add a little if they were properly approached. Oh, you don't want any more, do you?"

The two were silent for a moment. Then Snider spoke. "What do you want?" he asked.

"I'm thinking," said Sawyer. "Let me consider now." He knit his brows. "Well," he said after a moment's pause. "I'm going to let you down easy without any jar. You'll just promise to be good and lead upright and honest lives. I'll see that you do, too. Next, you'll refund me the sum of thirty-five dollars, fraudulently and feloniously extorted from me, and—what salary is Miss Jones, your stenographer, supposed to receive, Mr. Bantry?"

A flush dyed Mr. Bantry's pasty skin. "That," he said, with some spirit, "is no affair of yours."

"No?" queried Sawyer. "You think not? Well, you happen to be mistaken, my tufted tin-horn friend. I am making it my affair. We'll just collect another thirty-five for Miss Jones, for which I will give you a receipt, and Miss Jones will stay with Klem-Buller's until she resigns, which will be when she wants to resign. Do I make myself clear?"

"Miss Jones has paid no part of her salary to—to the agency," protested Bantry.

"That's right," Snider corroborated.

"I hear you say so," observed Sawyer, "and I wouldn't believe you on oath where the sum of ten cents was involved," he added, smiling.

Then his fist smote the table. "Pungle up!" he gritted. "This conference is over."

Five minutes later, Sawyer was attacking his steak and mushrooms with a fine appetite, to the admiration of the hovering Owgoost. There was a distinct bulge in the breast pocket of his coat, and he grinned excessively.

He tried to tone the same grin to a smile, expressive of welcome, triumph

ically. "You mustn't try to do all the work there is at once. Sit down here a moment, please. I've got quite a tidy lot of tidings for you—perishable—wont keep."

He motioned to one of the wicker chairs, with which the landing was furnished, but Miss Jones remained stand-



"I'm going to let you down easy, without any jar. You'll just promise to be good and lead upright and honest lives."

and a few other pleasant emotions, when he met Miss Jones the same evening. He was standing on the second floor landing when he saw the fuzzy gray hat at the foot of the staircase, and he drew back to await her coming, smiling as has been said.

"What, ho!" he called, cheerily.

The gray brim tilted back and the gray eyes rested upon him, heavy lidded and wearily.

"Hard day?" said Sawyer, sympathet-

ing. There was an odd look in her eyes.

"I wont sit down, thank you," she said. "What is it you have to tell me?"

"To begin with, I'm fired," grinned Sawyer.

"So I've already been informed," she said, with disconcerting coolness.

"Subsequently I dropped on our mutual friend, Mr. Bantry, with the full force and effect of a three-story brick building, and from his mangled remains I got—what do you think?"

"I think you got something you richly deserved," said Miss Jones. Her eyes were growing luminous, but it was a baleful luminosity. Sawyer was enjoying himself altogether too much to take notice of it.

"You guessed right the very first time," chuckled Sawyer. "I got what was coming to me. He got part of what was coming to him. Also I collected for you what he and his precious pal have been holding out on you, estimating that you were plucking down fifteen dollars weekly; the other five is the registration fee from the employment agency. I've given him his receipt. If the amount is wrong, tell him I'd like him to make it right."

The handbag that she carried was opened and he dropped a tight little roll of bills into it.

"And don't worry," he added. "All this was between Mr. Bantry and me. You won't suffer. Now do you want to hear all about it, or shall I tell you after dinner?"

Miss Jones raised her head to a poise of extreme dignity. "I think I've heard enough, and more than enough," she answered. "I've heard you make false and cowardly insinuations against Mr. Bantry, who only engaged you out of kindness and very properly discharged you for good reasons. I knew Clifford Bantry years ago back home, and I—I respect him, and I don't thank you for your interference in my affairs, and I'll be obliged if you'll attend to your own in the future."

She turned away, leaving Alonzo in a condition between petrification and stupefaction, but before she ascended the next flight of stairs, she paused. "I shall keep the money and return it to Mr. Bantry," she said. "I don't know what you mean by 'holding out.' Nobody ever 'held-out' on me. I do know what holding up is, though. I've got my opinion of people like you."

Sawyer fell limply into one of the wicker chairs and watched the young woman as she passed onward and upward and disappeared.

"'Clifford!'" he exclaimed in accents of deep disgust. "'Clifford!'"

Then he arose, with a long drawn sigh.

He went to bed in a depressed state of mind, got up the next morning with the pall of gloom heavy upon him and ate a deplorably light breakfast. As he was leaving the house, the buttoned menial ran after him with a letter which Sawyer, being occupied with somber thoughts, thrust carelessly into his coat pocket. He walked southward less briskly than was his wont, but the sun was shining brightly, and when he reached Grant Park and saw the long stretch of gleaming lake, his spirits began to rise perceptibly. For a moment, the sparkle of the water tempted him to a morning's loaf at one of the clubs. He knew some of the men and was sure of a welcome. He wanted to be welcomed somewhere. Nevertheless, he put the temptation aside, and turning resolutely westward, was presently seated in the lobby of a centrally situated hotel unfolding a morning newspaper.

Just then he recollected his letter. The envelope bore the return inscription of Klem, Buller & Co. Alonzo frowned and then tore it open and read as follows:

The bearer of this, Mr. Alonzo Sawyer, lately in our employ as city salesman, is cordially recommended to anyone needing the services of an alert, industrious and highly capable man. Mr. Sawyer's sales record during the time he has been with us has shown a high percentage of increase in the district to which he was assigned, and we are parting with him unwillingly and with regret.

(Signed) J. WAGSTAFF,
Sales Manager.

"Bless his old ossified heart!" said Sawyer. "He certainly has described me to a hair."

"Well," he continued, reflectively, "after all, I doubt if I would ever have saved all that money without help, and here's as good as a better job; and as for the Little Gray Mouse—"

He spread out his newspaper at the want advertisements.

"Altogether it might have been worse," he grinned.

The Woman Who



ILLUSTRATED

BY

GEORGE

BREHM

NEW YORK, Aug. 20, 1912.

N

My Dear Girl:—

Hurrah! The play is taken! I meant to wire you last night, but hadn't time. Maxwell and I had a little celebration in honor of the good news. I had a long talk with Cartwright yesterday: he had just finished reading the play, and says he thinks it *great*. He had his scenic artist there, and we arranged all the details of the settings. He is to get up models for my approval at once. Cartwright says he wants the thing put on right—hang the expense. I tell you, Mary, we're going to be on Easy Street in a few weeks.

Jane Mason is slated for the leading rôle, supported by Richard Avery and Miss Tuttle. It's a splendid cast. I suppose we will open somewhere out in the country and then come right into New York. That ought to mean a thousand a week in royalties, at least. Now you see that I was right when I made up my mind to get away by myself up there in the woods and work with a free mind. Everyone who reads the play agrees that it is a splendid piece of work.

I understand that the rehearsals are to begin inside of three weeks, so I think I had better stay right here and look after details. I can't accomplish anything by being at home there with you, and here I am needed every day to see that things are moving along as they should.

Nor do I think that anything will be gained by your coming here now. You had better stay right where you are until the rehearsals are over, and then I'll arrange for you to come on for the opening night.

I don't see why you blame me for not having answered your last letter. Surely you understand how busy I am, how many people I have to see, and how little time I have for letter-writing. As for the woman you say Will Evans saw me dining with last Saturday, that was Miss Barrington, a well-known actress whom I have recently met. She hasn't done anything very big yet, but I feel that she hasn't had a chance, and I'm going to write a play for her that will give her one.

She is a remarkably intelligent and broad-minded woman, devoted to her art, and I find it a great pleasure to talk to her.

My work is going to throw me constantly with people of this sort, and you must understand once for all that I cannot be hampered by any petty jealousies on your part.

And don't worry about my health. This success has made me feel like a new man. I'll take good care of myself, and let you know how things are going just as often as I can. Am enclosing a clipping from one of the papers this morning, regarding the play. It begins to look as if your husband were really

Stayed at Home

By Mabel Herbert Urner

Author of "The Journal of a Neglected Wife," etc.

and

Frederic Arnold Kummer

Author of "The Other Woman," etc



getting up in the world, doesn't it?"

Never mind about sending the light overcoat. I'll get a new one when I need it. You can give the old one to William, if you like. I've got to look well or this Times Square crowd will think I'm broke. They wouldn't be far wrong at that, but I don't want them to know it.

Give my love to the children, and with much for yourself,

Affectionately, your husband,
Dick.

After midnight.

Allentown, Vt., August 22, 1912.

Richard Dear:

I know I shouldn't write you now—that I should wait until morning when I will be more self-contained. But I cannot sleep—I *must* talk to you.

Dear, I am *afraid* of your success! Already I feel that it is taking you farther from me. You have never seemed so far away and so—I don't know how to express it—impersonal? No, that isn't quite the word, but you must know what I mean.

I want your success—but I want *you* more! Oh, if you only knew of the sleepless nights I have spent thinking of you there in New York in the midst of the "Great White Way." In one of the magazines this month there is an article about it, and the first illustration is a brilliant restaurant scene with beautiful women in low cut gowns and jewels. The whole picture breathes of wine, music and gayety. And oh, the women—they are so wonderfully gowned!

"I even got down to eating free lunches because I was hungry."

Since I have seen that picture, I am always thinking of you in a place like that. There is one particularly beautiful woman who I imagine looks like Miss Barrington, and somehow I always think of you as the man who is sitting beside her.

Oh, I know this is all distorted fancy, and I shouldn't let myself dwell on it. But, dear, I am eating out my heart in loneliness and longing for you. Some times I even feel that I would almost rather you *wouldn't* succeed—

(*Not finished and not sent.*)

(*The Letter That Was Written and Mailed the Next Morning.*)

Allentown, Vt., Aug. 22nd.

Dear Richard:—

For your sake I am glad to hear your play is taken and that the prospects look

so bright. I do so hope it will all turn out as you expect.

But if it shouldn't—remember, dear, that there are other things in life besides a successful play. We have been so very happy with just each other and the children, that at times I am almost jealous at this new absorbing interest in your life which takes you from me. So if there should be any disappointments, remember that we still have all we ever had—and to me that seemed so much.

I didn't mean to worry you about Miss Barrington. Forgive me, dear, but I am so lonely and miss you so much that sometimes I can't help brooding over things that in my heart I should know were not true.

I had hoped you could come home or I could come to you by the first. But since you think it best, I will stay on here. It is less expensive, I know, and that is an item just now.

I am getting along very well, except that I am rather anxious about the baby. She has been fretful and feverish all this week, but perhaps it is only her teething.

Rosamond sends you this little letter. She spent all afternoon printing it out with great pains. I think she is improving—don't you? Although she *will* turn her *s's* the wrong way. Try to send her a note in reply. She will be so disappointed if you don't.

She is really a great comfort and help to me. She can dry the dishes now and carry them into the dining-room. You ought to see her taking them one at a time—holding them very tight, and proudly putting them down. She is so very earnest and sweet about it all.

Write me when you can, dear. I know you are very busy, but just a line or even a post card will help. It seems to me that I am always waiting for the postman's whistle, and yet he rarely brings me what I want—some word from you.

Lovingly,

Your wife—Mary.

New York, Sept. 2nd.

Dear Mary:

I haven't written you for the past

few days, because I have been too blue and upset. Things are going all wrong. I sometimes believe there's a conspiracy against me, among some of the big managers. Cartwright has been very cool lately. I went to see him twice yesterday, but he hadn't time to see me. I heard indirectly that he was talking of putting off my rehearsals and using the cast for another play.

This morning I determined to see him, and after waiting nearly an hour had a short interview. He said he had just read a new play that he liked better than mine, and that he had decided to put it on first. I felt just the way you do when you come down suddenly in an express elevator. At last I struck bottom.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "I thought you felt 'The Question' was such a good play."

"Every play's a good play," he said, "until you read a better one."

I tried to get him to tell me when he would put mine on, but he wouldn't give any definite answer. Somehow it seemed to me that his attitude was different. Of course, I may be mistaken in this. He's a very busy man, and has fourteen shows either playing or in rehearsal, but I couldn't help thinking that some one, I can't imagine who, has been "knocking" me to him.

I left his office and walked down Broadway as far as Twenty-third Street and back, trying to figure this thing out, but I can't understand it. I met Buckley coming out of the Imperial. He's on the *Recorder*, you know. Wanted an interview with me last week. He only stopped a moment. "Hear your play has been shelved. Hard luck!" was all he said, then hurried on. I wonder how he knew it so soon. Last week he asked me to dine with him, but this morning he didn't have time to take a drink.

They're all alike—no use for anything but success. The minute things go against you, you haven't a friend.

I felt half inclined to drop the whole business this afternoon and take the five o'clock train for home, but on second thought decided that it would be

better to stay on here and see the thing through. There's no use in giving up the fight now. I have just as much confidence in myself as ever, and in my ultimate success. I have the dramatic instinct, and I know it, and I'm going to make the world know it, before I get through.

Miss Barrington—she's the actress I wrote you about some time ago—says she thinks my work shows real genius, and I'm sure she could have no reason to flatter me. I had expected to talk matters over with her this evening—she knows so much more about the game than I do—but she just telephoned that she has a sick headache, and can't see me, so here I am, in this God-forsaken hotel, writing to you. I tell you all this because I know you understand me, and believe in me, and realize that it is only a question of time when I shall come out on top.

Hope the baby's illness will not prove serious. I have enough to worry about, without that.

Good-night, dear, and much love.

Yours,

Dick.

September 4th.

Oh, my dear Richard, why wont you give it all up and come home? Can't you see that it is the only way to save yourself further disappointments and heart-aches? And I—I could almost be *glad* of your failure, if it will only bring you back to me!

Somehow, deep in my heart I have always felt that you could not succeed in this work. Don't you remember how in the beginning I pleaded with you to stay with Bennet & Cole? But your one ambition was to write plays. And finally I saw that even if I could persuade you to stay in business—you would always blame me. You would always believe you could have written a great and successful play had I not held you back.

But now you *have* tried—you have had one bitter failure and are on the verge of another. Must you go on and on? Haven't you had enough? Can't you see, dear, that it was a mistake? Wont you come back to the children and

to me? And take up some dependable business where you will have a regular income and we will be spared the anxiety and hardships of these many months?

I have tried not to worry you about the expenses here, have managed in every way I could to get along. But it seems now that I am almost at the end of my resources. The grocer's bill has been running for over two months. It is \$38—if you could spare me enough to pay that—

The baby is some better, but she is still very fretful. She is crying now—so must go to her.

Hurriedly,

Mary.

New York, Sept. 12, 1912.

Dear Mary:

So you too desert me. That is the last straw. I didn't expect much from so-called friends, whose chief interest in my success lies in what they could get out of it. But for you, my own wife, to lose confidence in me just when I needed it most, is a pretty bitter pill to swallow.

So you think I made a mistake to try to succeed in the play-writing field, do you? Well, I'm going to show you that you are wrong, if it takes the last drop of blood in my body. The kind of work you want me to do is drudgery, pure and simple, and I was never cut out for it. I should think you would know my temperament well enough by this time to realize that.

It's all very well to say that everyone is writing plays nowadays, but they are not selling them—and I am. You know what my ambition has always been—to have a successful play running on Broadway, and I'd be a pretty poor sort of a stick to give up now, just because things are going a little against me.

Suppose all the great writers and painters and musicians of the world had given up their work and gone into business, just because their art didn't pay—where would our great masterpieces of literature and music and painting be now?

No doubt you would have been much

better off if I had been a prosperous plumber or a successful dealer in butter and eggs, but I'm not. And I do not propose to desert my colors and surrender, just because fortune has given me a few hard knocks. I feel that I have the ability to succeed and I'm going to do it, in spite of anything you or anybody else may say.

I know you will think it heartless of me to write in this way, but success isn't a question of heart or sentiment. It's a question of ability and nerve—and I know I have both.

I can't help it about the money. I'll try to raise some this week somehow. I've moved to a little room down on Tenth Street, and I'll cook my own meals and live on bread and milk, if need be, but I'm going to *succeed*—remember that—in spite of anything or anybody.

Your husband,

Dick.

Allentown, Vt., September 15th.

I am sorry, Richard, much more sorry for your sake than for my own. For I know you are going on only to further and more bitter disappointments. However, I will say nothing more—I realize the futility of that.

Aunt Carrie was here yesterday. I told her nothing. But she stayed for luncheon and could not help but see. I made no excuses or explanations—I couldn't. And she asked no questions. But she wanted to know if I would embroider her a tray cloth, a half dozen doilies and a large center-piece.

She gave me twenty dollars to get the material and for part of the work—and is to give me twenty more when they are finished. And she thinks she can get me orders for all I can do.

So you need not worry about that grocery bill. I will pay twelve dollars of it now, and the rest can go for a while longer.

The baby is better. I think now it was only her teeth. Rosamond insists on sending you another note. Since you did not answer her—to keep her from being disappointed, I pretended to read some messages for her from your letter. That

is what she refers to. Try to write to her, if only a few words. She talks of nothing else.

As ever—your wife.

Mary.

New York, October 10, 1912.

Dear Mary:

I've given up the fight. Bennet is responsible. I suppose you know why, by this time, as I think he must have written to you. I'm coming home on Tuesday. I would come to-day, but there are some money matters I must straighten out here first. I'm coming home a failure, and I have no excuses to offer. I've been a fool, and worse, I guess, but I think I see the right road now.

Bennet never had much sympathy with my ambitions—you know that. When everybody else sympathized, and tried to encourage me with false hopes, he sat back and watched the course of events, and said nothing. At last I went to him. I went for sympathy—help. What I got was a good smash right between the eyes, and I guess that was what I needed more than anything else in the world. Somehow it seems to have brought me to my senses.

I had been doing some work for one of the papers, as I wrote you, and hanging around Cartwright's office, trying to get him to fix a date for the production of "The Question." At last he told me he had shelved the play indefinitely, and did not know that he would ever produce it. Of course he had under our contract a year to produce it in, so he didn't have to hurry any. I told him I wanted to get it on this season, if possible, and he suggested that if I could get another manager to take it off his hands, he would be very glad. I went to them all, but got no encouragement. "Why doesn't Cartwright do it?" they all asked, and I couldn't tell them.

I'd been getting deeper and deeper in debt, as you know, and as a last resort, I got up the scenario of another play I had in mind—you remember that one I told you about, with the scene laid in Mexico. Two or three play readers passed on it, and turned it down cold. Said it had no merit whatever. I didn't



"There is one particularly beautiful woman who I imagine looks like Miss Barrington, and somehow I always think of you as the man who is sitting beside her."

know which way to turn, but still I believed in myself, and my ability, so I went down to see Bennet.

It seemed strange to be down on lower Broadway once more. I hadn't been there since I gave up my position with Bennet's company two years ago. You may remember that he told me at the time that I'd make more money in selling cement than I ever would in writing plays. I laughed at him then, and I went down there prepared to laugh at him again. I was full of confidence in myself, in spite of the hard knocks I'd been getting. I went in and told him my story. He listened quietly enough, but when I asked him to let me have five hundred dollars to tide me over, he just jumped up and grabbed me by the shoulders, and shoved me into a chair and looked at me.

"Dick," he said, "come out of your trance. You're no more a genius than I am. Stop chasing rainbows and come back to earth. You're a rattling good business man, and you can make a fine living that way, if you'll only stick to it, instead of imagining you're a playwright. There are thousands like you, all trying to do something they don't know anything about, and haven't the least natural ability for. You want to write plays, because you think it's a quick and easy way to make a lot of money. You've read somewhere about successful playwrights making a quarter of a million dollars out of a single play, and you think you're going to do the same. It's the 'get rich quick' fever that's back of all your ambitions, not genius.

"I've listened to all you've said about this playwriting business, and I tell you, you're dreaming. I happen to know something about the game myself. Watson, who is a sort of cousin of mine, has been at it for ten years. When you telephoned this morning that you were coming down to see me, I called him up and asked him to meet me here. He's outside now. I want you to talk to him."

I sat there in a daze, while he brought his cousin in. He is a chap about forty, with a tired, gray face. Used to be in

the newspaper business, and still does dramatic criticisms for one of the monthly magazines, I believe. Graduate of Harvard, and has written a lot for the magazines. I listened to what he told me in amazement. He said he had given up his newspaper work, had gone into playwriting, about ten years ago. Since then he has had eight plays produced. When he started out, he had saved up about five thousand dollars, and he figured that would see him through.

In the first two years he had two plays produced. Both were failures. When he figured up, he found that the experience had cost him \$6,500. He'd used up the five thousand, and fifteen hundred more he had made on some stories he'd written, just to keep going. He's married, and it cost him about three thousand a year to live. The five hundred had gone for typewriting, foreign copyrights for the two plays, and traveling expenses connected with them.

The third year he had a success, which ran on Broadway for three months. He got an average of five hundred a week, during its New York run, which amounted to about \$6,000. On the road it didn't do so well, and after twenty weeks it was withdrawn on account of the illness of the star—at least that's what the newspapers said. His royalties for the twenty weeks were \$4,000 more, so that the play netted him \$10,000 for the season.

Against this, he had his losses for the two previous years, amounting to \$6,500, and his living expenses for the third year, which came to \$4,000 more. He'd lived a little better that year, on the strength of his success. At the end of the year, his accounts for the three years showed him that he had made \$10,000, and spent \$10,500, a net loss of \$500 for the three years.

Since then he had struggled along, never making more than he spent, but always hoping for the big, smashing success that didn't come.

"It's what every playwright is hoping for," he said, "but the chances are about one in five million."

He told me about the anxiety, the

work, the heart-breaking disappointments, the bitter humiliation of failure, and the usually inadequate reward of success, and I began to see that all this talk about play-writing being a gold mine is rot. It's like anything else—you hear about a few men who make good, and you think it must be easy. Watson said that he works twice as hard as his brother, who is a lawyer, and makes about one-fifth his income. His brother lives in a lovely house up the Sound, and has about twenty times the comfort and happiness in life that Watson has.

I asked him why he didn't give it up. "I can't," he said. "It's the only thing I know how to do, and then I'm always hoping for that big popular success. Play-writing is a great deal like gambling. Once you get the habit, it's hard to quit. A man who goes into it to make a fortune has got to have a big capital to lose, nerve enough to lose it, and the luck of the devil himself. Under those circumstances, if he also has the necessary ability, he *may* win—at least the chances will not be more than a hundred to one against him. But for a fellow like you, without training, without experience, without capital to keep you going, without friends in the business, and with a family to support—why, man, you'd better go out and get a job as a day laborer. You'll make more money in the end." And considerably more to that effect.

When he got through, I felt pretty limp, I can tell you. Then Bennet—dear old Bennet—came forward and offered me my old position back again, provided I would agree to give up this play-writing game forever. "Think of your duty to your wife and children," he said. And when I think of all you have meant to me, and of how little I have appreciated all your patient goodness, your strength and courage, it makes me feel pretty small. I didn't lose any time in accepting his offer, I can assure you. He wants me to start in the first of the year, at my old sal-

ary, and it will be mighty good, I can tell you, to see the check coming in the first of every month.

So I'll be back next Tuesday, and we'll talk about the future, provided you still want any future with me after the way I've treated you. You had better let me know. I realize that this must seem like a very sudden surrender, after the way I have talked during the past three months, but that fellow Watson opened my eyes. Those months, as I look back at them, seem like some sort of a horrible nightmare. I'm just beginning to get back my self-respect. I'd pretty well lost it—up there around Times Square. I'd even got down to eating free lunches because I was *hungry*.

And now, Mary, it's up to you. I have tried you sorely, I know, but perhaps your respect and love for me are not quite gone—perhaps they may even be great enough to forget it all, and to try life over again with me on a new and better basis. Write to me. I shall expect to hear from you before I start back home.

Lovingly yours—Dick.

October, 12th.

Don't you know that I *love* you? Nothing has ever changed or can change that. Oh, Richard, come—come to-morrow! I need you so. I have no strength nor courage now—I'm pitifully weak and unstrung.

Since your letter I have broken down completely. I don't know what has kept me up through all these awful months. But now that I feel that they are over—that there is to be no more of the strain—the reaction seems to be more that I can bear.

I can think of nothing but my longing to creep into your arms and cry—just cry. Oh, Richard, when you come, don't try to talk—just take me in your arms and hold me close and *let* me cry.

Don't wait until Tuesday—just *come!*
Mary.

Something more
vague than police
had got hold of
him.

The

ILLUSTRATED
BY
C. B. FALLS



Used and abused by lout
and knave,
Sister to sister as clod
to clod,
None they save when they
think to save—
But oft they do by the grace
of God.

THE moving picture machine stopped with a click at the finish of the film. The lights went suddenly up in the stuffy, smelly little theatre, revealing a cheap stage setting, consisting of two tawdry "flies" and a back drop representing a mythical Main Street. The floor of the stage was bare, full of splinters, and very dusty. It was upon such a scene, amid such surroundings, that he appeared six or seven times each day, sang his songs in a flat, mechanical voice, and delivered his rapid-fire, unhumorous patter.

He was billed as "Gerald Gregory, Monologist."

He was tall, slim, dudish and vain. He prided himself upon looking "immaculate" among the more tawdry performers who worked on the same bill with him. He wore a cut-away "walking" coat, which, while still imposing, had undoubtedly seen better days; a top hat, with slightly unkempt fur; an austere and painfully aristocratic high collar, tied with a huge black ascot puff, which was held together by an imitation pearl; "high-water" trousers; vivid buttoned

gaiters over cracked patent leather shoes. Though his array was shabby genteel, he wore it with quite an air, carried himself with an affected pomp which was a bit inspiring to his humble audiences and was really quite successful in cloaking the innate lowness of his character, the taint of natural degradation in his bones.

His chest was narrow, his shoulders high, thin, and set close together like a fowl's; his head resembled a fowl's, small, sleek and thin of skull.

Though he was young,—about nineteen,—his smirking face had an old and cynical expression of leering and vulpine wisdom. Yet there was a shallow, alert handsomeness about him. When he smiled, it was a bit infectious, a bit disarming. It kept you from actually analyzing him, or attempting to gauge him accurately. His hair was slicked back with cosmetic, his finger-nails clean and brightly polished. He carried himself jauntily, both on and off the stage. And he had that cool, sprightly, arch devil-may-care way with him which young girls seem to find quite likable.

S N I D E

A STORY YOU OWE IT
TO YOURSELF TO READ

By Harris Merton Lyon

Author of "Sardonics," "A Sister of Shallot," etc.

As he walked onto the stage, humming a bar of his opening song, he twirled a slim bamboo cane with which he whipped the air and punched at imaginary companions. You could tell at once, as he started singing, that he was of British birth. His voice had that clogged, choked, adenoidal quality: as if it were confined high in his head. For instance, he said: "Dot adother wörd!" for "Not another word!" He skipped about for a moment or two in his shabby mockery of elegance, doffed his silk hat at the audience, and rattled off a verse to the effect that,

There's nobody like father,
Ever clever, stunning, cunning
father.

When he had done, he paused, his hand on his chest, awaiting the applause of the audience. None came.

"Loud cheers!" he commented brazenly, and went on with another English song, which cautioned you that "As you walk down the Strand," all sorts of things may happen to you, and that "if you can't be good, be careful."

Then followed some monologue patter about his friend Cuthbert, who had gone tiger-shooting in "Injah," and at the conclusion of his act he did some of that curious *ex-tempore* rhyming which finds favor occasionally in British music halls—that selecting of people in the audience, pointing them out with the cane and reeling off in a sing-song:

Now there I see a gentleman; he
really is quite old.

But he could charm the girl in
brown if only he were bold.
And on my left a girl in blue, she
really is so sweet
She can get a husband easy; there's
a million in the street.

For this sort of thing Gerald Gregory received twenty-five dollars a week. He paid his own expenses and journeyed from town to town throughout New England, filling in his time on various moving-picture show circuits. He had no philosophy of life, of course; no aim, even, in existence. Day in and day out, eating in cheap restaurants, sleeping in vile lodging-houses, uttering his foolish patter before stolid mill-town audiences, he was quite content.

Outside of working hours he consorted with the idle, the sly, the cheating young ne'er-do-wells common to all small towns—around the door of the theatre, at the railway station, in pool halls, in hotel lobbies, on street corners. He knew all sorts of short-change schemes and sleights-of-hand with coins; he even carried contraptions, such as a rubber band up his sleeve, to work his tricks. And he carried an assortment of obscene photographs, rhymes, and the like stuff usual among youths of his stamp.

He had knocked about the world since his mother died, leaving him a half-starved child, aged eleven, in a Birmingham boarding-house. He had made his way, such as it was, by his wits. He had been in London, Sydney, Capetown, Bermuda, Nova Scotia, Canada; and every contaminating circumstance in

which he had found himself had left its stain upon him, as it had also left him with renewed impudence, boldness and cunning.

There was one fascinating game in his life—flirting. The towns he passed through teemed with giggling, half-sophisticated girls, whose weak or worn-out parents left them to their own devices—parents tired at night of their work and of their own lives, pitifully incompetent to control even their own wills, let alone the more vigorous wills of their daughters. So the daughters, from twelve to twenty years old, paraded the streets arm in arm, flocked to the moving-picture show or gossiped and flirted at the soda fountain.

In the silly, slangy repartee of such encounters Gregory was a past master. Among the groups of town-boys with whom he drifted the tattle was always of this girl or that, a chatter of noxious insinuations, and Gregory made it a point, each new town he came to, to pick up as much of it as he could; as a result, his suit-case contained scores of inane post cards, scrawled in ignorant girlish hands—testimonials to light affairs that had happened along his route. He made no replies, no attempts to keep the past alive. There were always new towns just ahead, and fresh conquests to be made.

II

It was at Woodston on Monday that at the close of his act, he had sung:

And there's a girlie yonder with
eyes as bright as steel;
I'd really rather have her than an
au-to-mo-beel.

She had immediately blushed and giggled. Other girls had giggled at her. When he had left the stage and was standing out by the door, inhaling a cigarette, she had passed by. He recognized her.

"Hello, kid," he said.

She tossed her head and walked on. But she entered a shop where there was a soda fountain. He followed. She felt a warm pulsation of her blood, a confu-

sion and quickening of its rhythm; and the fugitive, yet persistently recurring thought in the back of her head was: "He's after me." Secretly she admired him. He had on his "stage clothes," she observed, all save the "stove-pipe" hat. That had given way to a derby for street wear.

He sat down on the high stool next to her, and ordered a syrupy drink.

"If you're thirsty, try one of these on me," he said.

She did not answer.

"Wont you, kid?"

She lowered her lids and blushed thickly. "I don't mind," she half mumbled.

It was great fun to have an actor-gentleman for a fellow. None of the other girls ever had had that pre-eminence in the town.

He flirted mildly with her for two or three days. She told him her name—Grace Dartnow. From other sources he found out that her father was dead, that her mother was a crippled seamstress, that Grace did not "run" with the other girls.

Grace was not really pretty: she was young, wholesome, clean, and vivacious; rather empty-headed, and rather obstinate. She did everything on impulse; afterward, she could not tell why. She said simply, "I wanted to." If the result of her action turned out bad and she was reproached, she said, pettishly: "Oh, I can't be bothered."

Thursday night he said to her: "You don't use the passes I give you, do you?"

"Oh, I've got plenty of money. My father left it to me." By plenty of money she meant one hundred and fifty dollars.

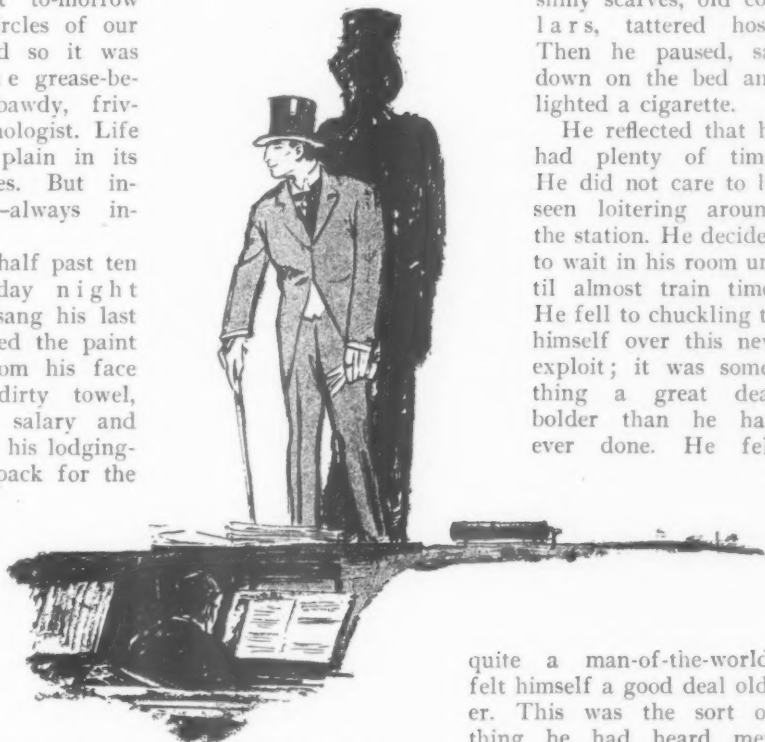
It was when he learned this that Gregory decided to take her along with him. At least to Boston. That was his next stop. In an obscure show house there he was "booked" for a week. It was planned she should leave with him on the midnight train Saturday. As is usual in such cases, he was to marry her—"as soon as everything was settled."

III

Then occurred one of those peculiar

episodes which frequently upset the most settled of us, hurrying us counter to all our intents and purposes, convincing us—for a brief time, at least—that, instead of our being the children of our wills, we are the puppets of an inscrutable fate. How often has the reader done some extraordinary thing, out of the rut of his life, rebellious while he is doing it, and unable to tell afterward the Why that compelled him! There is always a possibility of a tangent to-morrow off the circles of our lives. And so it was with the grease-be-daubed, bawdy, friv-olous monologist. Life is never plain in its importances. But in-scrutable—always in-scrutable.

It was half past ten on Saturday night when he sang his last song, wiped the paint hastily from his face with a dirty towel, drew his salary and hurried to his lodging-house to pack for the train.



"Loud cheers!" he commented brazenly.

His room was on the third floor of a gloomy, odor-soaked professional boarding house, kept by an Italian family: the husband, an alcoholic wreck of a ballet-master, the wife a grimy, mountainous, ugly female drudge. They were both near fifty years old, yet their only child, Felix, was a boy of ten, bright, alert, thoroughly Americanized.

Gregory paid his bill to the woman, climbed up the dark stairs and entered his room, the cheapest room in the

house save one. His was an "outside" room, for one week's use of which he paid three dollars. The cheaper room was an inside room, separated from his by a thin partition and lighted only by a skylight. He knew vaguely that it was occupied by an "actress" and that the actress had been ill a long time.

Excited, unusually nervous, he began packing his battered paste-board suitcase, cramming into it his unlaundered clothing, his frayed, shiny scarves, old collars, tattered hose. Then he paused, sat down on the bed and lighted a cigarette.

He reflected that he had plenty of time. He did not care to be seen loitering around the station. He decided to wait in his room until almost train time. He fell to chuckling to himself over this new exploit; it was something a great deal bolder than he had ever done. He felt

quite a man-of-the-world, felt himself a good deal older. This was the sort of thing he had heard men boast about in bar-rooms, pool halls, dressing-rooms

the world over. He could just fancy himself bragging about it later on—"I picked up a girl once in a little New England town." All the same, it made him nervous. Couldn't they jail you for it?

Then confidence would return to him. The girl was clever enough; they would get away without any trouble. He smiled to himself. He must be a pretty handsome, attractive chap, to make the conquest of a girl like Grace as easily as

he had. With the never failing self-contemplative vanity of the public performer, he arose and went to the mirror of the bureau. He held the lamp up for a closer inspection of his features in the dingy glass. As he did so, his eye lighted for a moment on a photograph stuck upright in the middle of the mirror's frame.

With a slight qualm of disgust—at himself—he set the lamp down and tossed the photograph into his suitcase. He had no desire now to survey his features. He returned to the bed and lighted another cigarette.

The photograph was of his mother, the only picture of her he possessed. With that traditional sentimentalism of travelers and traveling players, who, lacking homes, carry these likenesses of home-idols with them, he had mechanically borne this with him up and down the noisome alleys of his drifting. In actuality he seldom looked at it. He took it out, placed it on innumerable bureaus, removed it, packed it again. It was part of his light baggage, like his comb and brush and box of grease paint. Yet now he reached over, picked it up and gazed at it intently.

The face told him nothing. It was the rather placid face of a provincial English trouper, the hair parted in the middle and chiseled into two tight and prominent "bangs," the eyes expressing a sort of tricky brightness, the nose pertness, the mouth a tendency to simper.

Yet somehow he felt again the qualm of disgust at associating the memory of his mother with the runaway affair he had in hand that night. His nervous, yellowy hand went up and scratched his scalp. His fringeless black eyes looked dreamily off at the lamp. More doubts assailed him; this time it was no anxiety



"Hello, kid!"

concerning the police. Something more vague than police had got hold of him. He sat in a semi-stupefaction, his feelings trembling on the edge of that unknown world where all our doubts are born. The coward in him was beginning to argue with some power that was awful and threatening and cold and intangible. The desire to run off with Grace was whimpering before the power which, by means of his mother's picture, made him disgusted with himself.

At this instant a horrible, inhuman shriek burst into his ear.

He leaped from the bed, trembling, half-crouched. The little, dull-lighted room seemed filled with something mawkish following on that shriek, a mawkish something that went right into his vitals and left him sick. He did not move. A sweat broke out on him. In a cramp of agony he stood there, rigid.

Again and again came the shriek, as of some beast in torture. It shot into his ears through the thin partition. It came from the skylight room.

He had heard subdued shufflings and murmurings in there but had paid no attention. The engrossment of his mind over his own escapade had made him, until then, forget his surroundings.

There was a hurrying patter of feet in the hall. He felt the common excitement, the quickened tumult of neighboring hearts.

He bounded to his half-opened door.

Little Felix, scared and white-faced, was running past.

"For God's sake," yelled the quivering actor, "what is it? Felix! Speak! What is it?"

The boy paused, gulped, made a frightened gesture with his hand toward the next room. "She—she's sick." He did not go ahead.

"Dying? Is she dying?"

Three times in rapid convulsions the awful sound from the other room almost overwhelmed his words.

Felix shook his head. "I don't know. The actress lady—she—she's having a baby."

Gregory shut his door and stumbled back to his bed. He was sick as soon as he had heard the word: acutely ill, ill as he had never been before. A queer fit of palsy seized him. He tried cramping his hands, holding onto the bed-rail; but the tremor persisted. A nausea, as if he had swallowed a poison, stirred him. That unearthly, staccato, wrenching cry kept up intermittently, wrung him like a rag.

"My God," he thought. "Do they suffer like that? Why don't they give her something—chloroform or something? My God, this is awful."

Then he thought: "I must get away from here. I can't stand this." But he did not move.

Suddenly, as suddenly as they had started, the cries died down, and there was a low moaning for a while. Then silence. Somebody had probably "given her something."

He moaned wretchedly—"Au-ah!" and bowed his head in his hands. He

had the sensation of cold sweat all over him. He was decidedly faint and ill.

All the valor of life had been torn out of him. All the externals of life, all the superficiais were gone out of his head. He forgot all about happy people out on the streets.

In these quiet rooms these horrible things could happen.

Then a sudden thought contended with him: He himself had been born in that way. The chances were that he had been born in just that way! A sick actress; an obscure lodging-house; a child born.

He knew nothing at all about his father, save that he sang what was considered tenor and that he had deserted his wife—a lone, sick actress—in a Birmingham boarding-house.

His mother!

He looked at the pert photograph anew. It was extraordinary to consider his mother in this light. He had never done so before. . . . Suffering to bear him, suffering to give him life, suffering to keep him alive; no doubt she had had a wonderful side to her.

He sat amazed. He considered, in that numbness which falls across a clever but ignorant mind when it is confronted by a primitive and beautiful truth.

"By Jove," he said, half-aloud. And "By Jove," he repeated.

He jerked his little paper-skulled head abruptly up, following a thought. An expression, unconsciously serio-comic, assumed its place around his yellowish eyes and cynical, narrow mouth. . . Undoubtedly all mothers had their wonderful side!

Why, yes. Men went on, pretty much as they liked; and all the time this sort of thing—the sort of thing in the other room—was being endured in lodging-houses up a side street from Everywhere!

He scratched his head, lighted a fresh cigarette and began walking up and down and around his little place.

He could hardly realize the new idea that had got hold of him and was striking out right and left at the old and filthy ideas. His mother, his mother's having *him*, was clean. Motherhood was

clean. And motherhood was a triumph of sex. Then *sex* must be clean!

In the rapid torsion of his thought, the monologist got much that he could never have expressed in the words his life was used to.

But he got, after all, the miraculous idea that sex could be something clean.

With him, with his kind—as with many another kind—the notion had always been that sex was something physically obscene. With one tearing cry, for one hour at least, an unknown woman on the other side of a partition had ripped that belief out of him.

Womanhood was not a thing to be dallied with.

Of course, most girls were silly and were flirts. Until you come to look at a thing like—like this. There was nothing silly or flirtatious in this.

Then he thought of his escapade. It was quite impossible. He couldn't go through with it now; he hadn't the stomach for it now; he abhorred the idea of it now.

Grace was young and clean. She had the possibilities, the clean possibilities of motherhood in her. And what would he do? Destroy—he couldn't even go on with the thought. Too much had occurred to him in half an hour. And who was he, to do this destruction? For once in his life he knew the truth about himself: a blackguard, a sneak, a rotten piece of what passed for manhood.

At least, that is what he silently called himself. And he blubbered a little—for he was only nineteen—and he picked up his mother's photograph and swore, with tear-filled eyes, that he would be a man.

Then he fell to thinking of all the mothers of all the girls.

They must all surely know these things which had been revealed to him by chance reflection. They must surely know that their daughters were potential mothers—with all that motherhood



"You'll find her down at the railroad station."

meant. And yet they let them gad about the streets, and flirt with all sorts of men—he felt quite virtuous—men much worse than himself. Why, even in the moving-picture shows alone, he reflected, the annual crime against potential motherhood was appalling. He thought of all the girls who had written him post cards. And of course he was only one out of hundreds who had passed over those circuits.

IV

In the neat, clean little cottage of the Dartnows, Grace had long ago finished the supper dishes, tidied up the sitting-room, brought in the lamp, and left her mother mildly ruminating over the Saturday evening weekly paper of Woodston. Then she had gone back into her own bedroom, packed a hand valise and dropped it out the window into the back yard. Her hands were warm and quick, and they trembled with desire as she worked. Her eyes were bright and big and soft. All her body seemed full of blood, full to the overflowing. She was in a tremendous flutter to keep calm.

After one last look around her pleasant, pure room, she came brusquely in to where her mother sat, shading her

eyes and smiling gently down at the newspaper. Her mother was reading a poem at the bottom of a column, a poem of domestic sentiment by Longfellow. But Grace, with her soft, bright eyes, was on fire with a different thought—of romance, adventure, lure. And she was smiling, too.

"I'm going to run down the street and get you some endive for a salad for to-morrow's dinner, Mother," she said easily.

Her mother started to protest. But Grace moved swiftly to the door. Somehow she felt that she could never go at all if she did not go swiftly.

But she turned—and looked back. Rushed to her mother. Hugged her hard and fast and kissed her feverishly again and again.

"Why, Grace—"

"Oh, Mother, you look so good, so good!" the girl almost sobbed. And this time she went.

V

Gerald Gregory, monologist, felt quite heroic and strong instead of feel-

ing himself a slinking, indecent poacher. For he called Felix, who was coming away from that dreaded next room of sincerity and pain, and he said:

"I want you to take a note for me. You know Grace Dartnow, don't you? Well, you'll find her down at the railway station in about fifteen minutes."

Then he gave the boy a dime and this note:

I took an earlier train. Go home to your mother, Kid, and be decent.

When he caught the 1:05 A. M. train, his mood had changed back to that of the cavalier-of-hearts. From the back platform the two or three winking, dimming lights of the town made him conscious that he was alone, fading away from an adventure.

He could just as well have been with her inside one of the speeding cars, murmuring his gallantries to a curly young head on his shoulder.

He ran his yellowy hand over his rather handsome face.

"Aint I the snide?" he sneered aloud, to the tossing darkness. "Aint I the snide?"



The PROBLEM

\$22.00 per week, income
26.00 per week, outgo
????

By John Barton Oxford

IF you are pegging along on a salary that brings you in twenty-two dollars per week, and your expenses for the said week, cut corners and pare things down as you will, foot up twenty-six dollars and some odd cents, what's the answer?

It is an interesting little problem. Many men have tackled it, perhaps not

in just these figures, but under analogous conditions. Some of them have tapped their employer's till; some have bucked the Street as represented by those ornate offices which make a specialty of margin business; some have simply quit and gone sailing downward, and some have sought out obscure hotels where they have torn up all the letters and

papers in their pockets, pulled the name-tags off their clothing, stuffed up all the chinks at the doors and windows, commended their souls to their Maker, and turned on the gas.

None of which, you will kindly notice, is a real solution, all being rather more or less panic-stricken evasions of the question involved.

Sammy Rogers had bumped against the problem—bumped against it in the exact ratio stated in the first paragraph. And for nearly a year now Sammy had been very distraught most of the time; he had figured, figured eternally, grown thin and irritable from all too little sleep, chewed his finger-nails to the quick, and otherwise made himself obnoxious.

You see, four years ago, Sammy had married. He was getting eighteen per, then. He and Mrs. Sammy had blissfully planned it all out. Two could live almost as cheaply as one, said they with their heads very close together, therein perpetrating that ancient fallacy of logic which is responsible for many such unions; also, Sammy was sure of at least a yearly raise of a dollar per week in his salary. Of course, there might be children; well, they'd put by a fund for such interesting events. There you were. It was all as plain as day. And so a certain clergyman received a shining new five-dollar gold-piece for launching the matrimonial craft.

Now that raise of one dollar per week had come regularly; also there were two little Rogerses, and Annie, the older, was a pale, sickly child, whose doctor's bills made that dollar per week increase of salary look like a very tiny drop of water in a very huge bucket. Also the cost of living soared sky-ward, and bills began to accumulate, and tradesmen began to appear nervous and reluctant when Sammy tried to say, nonchalantly, "Just put that down with the rest, will you?"

Sammy put up a plea at the office for an extra increase of salary; nothing doing. He tried to find something to do evenings which would eke out the insufficient income; nothing doing again. And here it was August, growing hotter

in the city daily, and little Annie ought to be in the country somewhere.

Three-thirty in the morning is a most depressing hour. To be sure, in August it is beginning to grow grayly light at that hour. Still, it is by no means an hour of optimism or cheerfulness.

At three-thirty that particular August morning, Sammy, tired of tossing about sleeplessly, arose, grabbed a pencil and some old envelopes, and began the figuring, which, while it ended nowhere, seemed somehow to help a bit in that at least it was something definite to do for the time being.

Milk-wagons went bumping past; a distant trolley-car clanged; a few sparrows quarreled noisily on a neighboring gutter. Little Annie woke and moaned fretfully for a time, before Mrs. Sammy—patient, tired, always gentle Mrs. Sammy—crooned the sick child to sleep again.

And those expenses wouldn't come down a cent from that twenty-six dollars; and the unpaid bills—Lord, the big stack of unpaid bills! What *was* the answer? What *was* it?

Then Sammy began to think. He began to think in channels into which heretofore he had never allowed his mind to stray. They had refused him a raise at the office of the Holworth Asphalt Company; but they hadn't refused to put a whole lot more work on him this past year. They had made him a sort of confidential clerk; they had set him figuring some of the contracts. Therefore, he knew the exact figures of the bid the Holworth Company would put in for the foundation work on the three new school-houses to be erected.

H'm, yes! He knew the total of each of those three sets of figures by heart. What wouldn't the Beckman Asphalt Company give to know them? H'm, yes! The Beckman crowd was not above getting such information any way they could.

Little Annie moaned again. The sun peeped up above the dingy roofs across the way. The stifling breath from the narrow street spoke of another unseasonably warm day. Sammy tore up the envelopes on which he had been figuring.

He'd begged for a raise, and all he'd got out of it was more work to do for the same money.

He built the fire and started breakfast. He had it all prepared when Mrs. Sammy awoke and came into the little kitchen.

"You and the kids are going into the country the last of the week, girlie," said Sammy blithely, as he kissed her resoundingly.

"Why, Sam," she demurred, "we can't possibly manage it! Why, there's all those bills—"

"You're going into the country, and maybe I'll come too, for a week or so," he repeated. "Little old Sam Rogers has just woke up!"

She looked at him sharply. "I don't see how you can manage it," said she.

"Watch!" was all he vouchsafed. "And say, don't look so worried, girlie! I'm not going to pinch the till, or anything like that."

She would have questioned him further, but Sammy forestalled her with a shake of his head.

"Leave it to me and watch!" he advised. "I've been a dead one, all right. Here's where I come to life."

Sammy arrived early at the office. He was grinning broadly. He was the old Sammy they had known there. He jollied the other clerks and unmercifully chaffed one of the stenographers who came in wearing a bunch of violets in her belt. By ten o'clock, between periods of necessary work on some new contracts, he had copied down from the private files every figure in those three foundation bids. At ten-thirty, with never a by-your-leave to anybody, he took his hat and left the office.

He shot down in one of the elevators to the street. Three open trolley-cars, loaded with whooping fresh-air children, were headed for the country. Sammy waved his hat to them and was greeted with rounds of shrill screams, evidently intended for cheers. He was glad for the yowling loads on the three cars. That's where kids belonged at this time of year—in the country, where his own two kids would be by the last of the week. Self-preservation and the

preservation of one's own was the first law of nature, wasn't it? You see, Sammy wasn't at all original, even with his platitudes.

On the sixteenth floor of the Harland Building, Sammy left the elevator, walked down a long corridor, paused before a door marked:

BECKMAN ASPHALT COMPANY
ENTER HERE

and pushed the door open.

"I want to see Mr. Beckman—Mr. J. P. Beckman," said Sammy to the clerk who came forward to the brass rail behind which were many desks. "It's very important."

"You have an appointment with him?"

"No."

"Then I'm afraid—"

Sammy waved an interrupting hand airily. Also he fished in his pocket and drew out a note.

"Just take this in to him, if you will. I think he'll see me when he reads it."

The clerk, looking bored and doubtful, as if he had taken in scores of just such notes quite uselessly, did as he was bidden. In a few moments he was back with a decidedly different mien. His manner was most cordial. He had a thick, black cigar in his hands.

"Mr. Beckman says he'll be glad to see you in just a few moments," said the clerk. "Wont you step in and take this chair? He says he'll be at leisure right away, and perhaps you'll find this cigar to your taste while you're waiting."

Sammy sat down in the easy chair inside the rail, which the clerk pulled forward for him. He took the cigar, but he did not light it. He sat twirling it about in his fingers. It looked like a corking cigar, too, as if it might have that delicious aroma which Sammy tasted perhaps twice a year, when, some particularly choice contract having been signed, old William Holworth would chucklingly shove a similar one towards him.

William Holworth wasn't a wholly bad sort, either. He—Sammy pulled himself up with a start. Deliberately he struck a match, put the cigar in his mouth, took it out and blew out the

match again. Something was tightening his throat. Something was burning his eyes. William Holworth wouldn't pass out any cigars to any man who came to him with such a note as Sammy had just sent into Beckman. Indeed, he wouldn't. He'd come raging out of his office and the sender of the note would be very lucky if he wasn't kicked downstairs. A fine, upright, square man, Old William Holworth, but tight when it came to the pay-roll. And self-preservation and the preservation of one's own was the first law—

Sammy gulped hard. What the dickens was the matter with him, anyway? Why should he be squeamish? Other men had done this thing. Any man, almost, placed as was he, unless the said man was a dead one, wouldn't scruple about a thing like this. It was business. It was William Holworth's fault—nobody's else! If William Holworth had paid him half adequately, he wouldn't be here.

Again Sammy lighted a match for that cigar; again he blew it out. He could see Beckman's cynical face as they dickered over the price that should be paid for a squint at those papers. Beckman would be smooth and suave and courteous, yet in his heart Beckman would be calling Sammy just another man with his price. All men had their price, according to Beckman's precepts.

Then the door of Beckman's office opened; Beckman, a smile on his handsome face, a carnation in the buttonhole of his faultless coat, came quickly across the office. He hadn't sent for Sammy, mind you, he was coming out to Sammy personally. Pretty clever of Beckman. He knew how to make the little things count.

"So this is Mr. Rogers," he said. "Your note interests me exceedingly. Wont you just step into my private office with me?"

A red mist swam before Sammy's eyes. Suddenly he seemed to grow and grow until Beckman was a little bit of a man somewhere far below him. Also something in Sammy's head went *snap!* just like that.

"No!" he bawled. Then, hurling the

cigar to the floor, he turned on his heel and fled the office, leaving behind him a roomful of covertly tittering clerks and a very angry and chagrined man with a carnation in the buttonhole of his faultless coat.

Sammy fairly ran back to his own office. It was a hot day. Perspiration streamed into his eyes, all but blinding him; his collar wilted; the dust from the street caked his sweat-streaked cheeks. All of which made him a very sorry figure when he panted into the office, made straight for the door of William Holworth's private room, and, to the horror of the office force, who thought Sammy most disgustingly drunk, burst open the door unceremoniously and tumbled in.

William Holworth looked up from the papers on the mahogany desk before him, grunted, adjusted his spectacles and looked again.

"Rogers," he snarled, "what's the meaning of this—your coming in here unannounced and in this condition?"

Sammy dabbed at his dripping face with his handkerchief; he clutched at his tie, which was skewed round under his left ear, and pulled it towards the front.

"It means I'm through here," he half-shouted.

"Very probably," said William Holworth drily.

"I'm done," Sammy averred. "I can't afford to stay here. It's costing me too much—I mean it's pretty near cost me my soul."

Holworth stared.

"Did you ever try to get twenty-six dollars out of twenty-two?" Sammy gurgled. "You ought to try it sometime. Great little conundrum. It's got 'Why are crows?' and 'How old is Ann?' beaten to a frazzle. You call yourself a business man. Say, I wouldn't stay a minute with such a business man as you are. You'll pay me twenty-two dollars a week and let me know things that are worth thousands. My kid—one of 'em—has been sick ever since she was born. I've got stacks of bills as high as this room; doctor's bills and butcher's bills and grocer's bills and all kinds of bills.

Twenty-two per and yet I know every figure in every bid this concern draws up!"

His voice rose so sharply it seemed about to break.

"I've just been over to Beckman's—been over there with the figures of the bids you're going to put in on the school-house foundations."

Holworth half started out of his chair. Then he smiled slowly.

"But you didn't show 'em to him, Sammy," said he.

"How do you know I didn't?" said Sammy.

"You'd never have come back here if you had," said Holworth. "Calm yourself. I begin to understand, now."

"Oh yes, calm myself," sneered Sammy; "calm myself and go right on spending twenty-six dollars every blessed week of my life when I'm getting twenty-two. Not by a jugful. I *didn't* show Beckman those papers, but it's no credit to you that I didn't. It's just that I'm through here. If I'm going to smash, I'm at least going with a clean conscience."

Quite suddenly Sammy collapsed into a chair and began to shake shamelessly with sobs.

"I wish I had," he groaned. "Every time I think of that kid of mine, I wish to God I had!"

Holworth leaned over and touched him on the shoulder.

"Rogers," he said in a queer voice, "you accused me of being a poor business man, of underpaying you when you had access to information worth thou-

sands. Maybe I'm not so poor a business man as you think. Maybe I know men when I see them; maybe I know the sort of man who couldn't sell information from this office, no matter how hard he was pressed. In other words, maybe I know you better than you know yourself."

He paused. "Why didn't you tell me about the sick kid when you asked me for that raise?" he snapped.

Sammy merely sat there shaking.

"We try men out thoroughly here," said Holworth. "We advance them slowly, but surely. You are booked to go onto estimate work the first of next month at thirty per week. Er—this won't affect the matter at all."

Again he paused.

"And if you need ready money to tide you over this financial crisis you seem to be facing, call on the firm. They'll let you have it. You can pay us back. You are going up the line with us. I'd never doubt you—after this."

Still Sammy merely sobbed away brokenly.

"Is there anything else I can do?" asked Holworth very gently.

Sammy's head went lower. His shoulders shook harder.

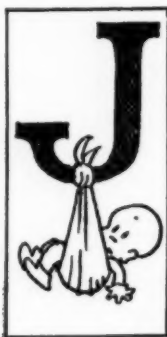
"Y-yes," he sniveled. "Have some one call up South 2445, ring 3. That's a d-drug store near our flat. T-tell 'em to send a messenger over to Mrs. Rogers at 436 Freeport Street, and say to her that she's to g-get the kids ready at once to go to the country t-this afternoon. H-have 'em t-tell her the message is from Mr. Rogers."



A Name For Jemima Georgina

by Lillian
Benyon
Thomas

ILLUSTRATED BY F. FOX



JEMIMA GEORGINA was the first-born of the Smithers family. If you are familiar with first-borns, you will not need to be told that she was a disappointment, especially to her father. Her mother was disappointed, but not for the same reason. She liked girls. They look well when dressed in white, with ribbons. Then their hair hasn't a cowlick, or if it has, it is easy to hide. But no woman likes to be blamed for the sex of her child. Jemima's ma tried to explain, but Jemima's pa could not follow the logic. He said: "Madam, you have given me the disappointment of my life."

"It was not my fault," she said.

"Not your fault?" Jemima's pa said with a sneer. "Nothing ever is your fault."

This was an argument he had used effectively through their married life, because Jemima's ma had never decided whether it was better to refute it, or leave it as it was; so she left it.

"Now what are we going to do with the name?" Jemima's pa asked. "James George we called him—you know as well as I do. James after your father, who was a state senator, and George for my father, who made a small fortune. That name was to be an inspiration to him, and now what are we to do with it?"

"I don't know," Jemima's ma said weakly; "maybe there will be another."

"Maybe there will be," Jemima's pa said, looking hopeful for a second, but only for a second.

"I'll never trust you again," he said.

"How can I tell that you will not do the same thing again. What assurance have I?" he insisted.

"I am sure I do not know," Jemima's ma acknowledged.

"No, that is just it," he said. "You never do know. But it is not that I object so strongly to his being a girl. What I do object to is the fact that I spent so much time choosing that name, and you let me do it. I spent hours over it, and you never stopped me. In fact, you encouraged me. Can you deny it?"

Jemima's ma couldn't, so there was silence for a few minutes. Then she said: "We might call him Mary Jane for his two grandma's."

"Yes, we might," Jemima's pa acknowledged; "but what inspiration would there be in that? What did they ever do?"

"They married their husbands," Jemima's ma said triumphantly.

"Yes, they did," Jemima's pa admitted, "but there is no credit coming to them for that. Your father wasn't anything when your mother married him, and my father was so poor any woman of sense would have turned him down."

"But it turned out all right," Jemima's ma said.

"Yes, it did, but it might have been all wrong. If they had married when your father was a senator and my father was successful it would have been a credit to them."

"But they couldn't; they *had* been married for years then," Jemima's ma explained.

"I want James George to marry the finished product," her pa said. "I don't want her to take any chances. You have started her out with a big handicap. You did it against my expressed wishes. You always were stubborn, but I am not going to talk about that now. I don't suppose it can be helped. But James George shall have every advantage that a father can give him."

"But you can't call him James George," Jemima's ma said timidly. She had discovered that the mistake in sex was to be overlooked as much as possible, but she felt, in a feeble way, that such magnanimity might be carried too far.

"I should like to know why I can't call him James George?" Jemima's pa asked. "Isn't he my child? Isn't he bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh? Who should name him, I would like to know?"

"But he isn't a boy," Jemima's ma protested.

"Don't keep harping on that," Jemima's pa said. "If I were you, I would be ashamed to mention it. I am surprised that you do."

"Well, you had better register the birth of something with the Board of Health," Jemima's ma said. She was always particular about the proprieties. "The law requires that births shall be registered."

"I will attend to that," Jemima's pa said, and with deliberate step and a look of determination, he went out, and made his way toward the office of the Board of Health.

The clerk was reading a novel when he went in and did not look up until Jemima's pa coughed several times and rapped on the counter. Then the clerk strolled over to the counter and waited with a bored look, until Jemima's pa said: "I wish to register a birth."

"Yes," the young man said. He yawned, picked up a pen and drew a book toward him. "When?" he asked.

"February the twenty-ninth," Jemima's pa said.

"A good day for a girl," the clerk said.

"How did you know he was a girl?" Jemima's pa demanded.

"I didn't know," the clerk replied, "I just said—"

But Jemima's pa interrupted him: "Do I look like a man whose sons would all be daughters? Could any fool like you tell that to look at me?"

"No—I don't know," the clerk said. "What is the name?"

"James George Smithers," Jemima's pa said.

"No, I mean the baby's name," the clerk said.

"And I told you the baby's name," Jemima's pa said, his lips set and his eyes glittering.

"I thought you said it was a girl," the clerk said, as he drew his pen through the word "female."



"Madam, you have given me the disappointment of my life."

"I did say girl," Jemima's pa said.

The clerk, discouraged, gave up and asked Jemima's pa all the necessary particulars about himself. Then he took a fresh start at the name of the baby. "What name are you giving the child?"

"James George," Jemima's pa repeated.

The clerk looked at him with his pen in the air. "But that is a boy's name," he objected.

"Who said it wasn't?" Jemima's pa asked.

"But you said he was a girl."

"He is a girl," Jemima's pa said; "but it is not his fault. Just write down 'James George Smithers.'"

The clerk threw down his pen and went to the back of the office, where a large man, with a large ring on his finger and a large chain in front of him, sat before a desk. He whispered to him for a few seconds; then the large man got up and walked over to the counter with an I'm - the - final - authority - and - Everything - goes - easy - when - I - appear manner, and said pleasantly: "You wish to register a birth?"

"I do," Jemima's pa said.

"When was the child born?" he asked.

"February the twenty-ninth," Jemima's pa said.

"A good date for a girl," the big man said.

"A girl!" Jemima's pa shouted, and he beat on the counter. "A girl! Did that fool tell you it was a girl?"

"No," the big man said, and looked surprised, "he didn't tell me anything about it. I just remarked—"

But Jemima's pa interrupted: "You just naturally remarked that he was a girl," he said, trembling with rage. "You and that clerk of yours are just naturally so clever that you could tell to look at me that he was a girl. If I had consulted you a few months ago, I suppose you would have told me to choose Mary Jane? You would have saved me all the trouble I had in choosing James George and getting the birth notices engraved!" And he emphasized his words by shaking his fist in the big man's face.

The big man stepped back out of reach, and said soothingly: "It is always well to choose two names."

"Oh, is it?" Jemima's pa said. "But tell me, did you choose two names for your eldest son?"

The big man blushed. "No," he said; "I'm not married."

"No, I thought not," Jemima's pa said with the first sign of satisfaction he had shown since the argument began. "Now from your experience of what other men do, do you think you will?"

The big man only said: "If I were fool enough to choose a name at all, I would choose two."

"Everybody is wise until they get there, young man!" Jemima's pa said. "And now will you put his name down—'James George Smithers?'"

"James George is a boy's name and we can't put it down for a girl," the big man said.

"I would like to know why you can't?" Jemima's pa asked, and he was dangerously calm. "You haven't a chick or child belonging to you. You acknowledged it yourself. You haven't even a wife, and yet you think you know more about James George than I do. You even presume to tell me what I may call him and what I may not. Maybe you think you could raise James George better than his ma and I? Maybe you, who never had a child, you, who never knew the joys of fatherhood, can tell what I should call James George? Maybe you are more capable of naming him than I am?"

He paused for breath, and the big man said: "The joys of fatherhood haven't anything to do with it. A boy's a boy, and a girl's a girl; and that is all there is to it."

"Oh, is it?" Jemima's pa said. "Then what would you do about the birth notices and the plans for his future, I should like to know? James George is to have a college education. He is to study law and be a judge or a governor. Do you think it is nothing to cheat a father of all his rights?"

"I don't wish to cheat you," the big man said patiently. "The kid is yours. You say it is a girl. Then give it a girl's



Four babies, backed up by their respective parents, stood before the altar.

name. The government is not responsible for the number of females that come when they aint wanted. It is bad enough to have to make laws for them when they are here."

"The government always falls down when it comes to the test," Jemima's pa said. "It is mighty powerful when you don't need it. When you are up against it, it says it's your own fault."

The clerk, apparently fearing the government was in danger, interfered at this point: "You might feminize the name. Most first-born females get their names that way."

"How would you feminize James George?" Jemima's pa asked.

"I would call her Jemima Georgina," the clerk said.

"Jemima Georgina," Jemima's pa said. "Jemima Georgina!"

Then he straightened up and looked the big man straight in the eye. "Does Jemima make you think of James and the Senate?"

"No, not exactly," the big man acknowledged.

"Does Georgina suggest to you my pa, who began with nothing and made himself a tidy fortune?"

"No, but—"

"Let me finish," Jemima's pa shouted. "Would you be inspired by Jemima Georgina? Would you call your first-born Jemima Georgina? Will you feminize him if I feminize James George?"

"You blithering idiot," the big man said, "call her Beelzebub, if you like."

"I don't want to call him Beelzebub," Jemima's pa said. "I want to call him James George, and I am going to call him James George. Don't you dare to feminize him. His pa will see fair play for James George or die in the attempt."

With this moving expression of loyalty, Jemima's pa went out, mumbling. The big man returned to his desk, and the clerks tittered. The man at the counter waited several seconds; then he called to the big man, "What shall I register?"

"The devil," the big man said.

The clerk wrote.

When Jemima's pa reached home, her ma said to him: "Mr. Haydon was here and he wishes to baptize baby a week from Sunday."

"What did you tell him?" Jemima's pa asked.



He loved babies, but he liked to have their parents near.

"I said we would."

"Did you tell him the name?"

"No."

"I have just registered him James George."

"Could you do it?" Jemima's ma asked.

"I did it," Jemima's pa answered, and walked out with dignity.

Four babies, backed up by their respective parents, stood before the altar, more or less meek suppliants for names, and at the end of the row was James George. Her mother looked nervous, and her father had a set to his lips and a glitter in his eyes that was ominous.

The first three babies went through their part with credit to themselves and their parents. There was no protest from any of the chief actors in the event, until it came James George's turn, and I'm not sure she would not have let the matter of her name pass, had it not been for an accident.

Mr. Haydon took James George in his arms and said, "What is her name?"

He was a little deaf, so Jemima's pa said it very plainly. But Mr. Haydon remembered that Jemima's ma had said

she was a girl, so he asked to have the name repeated.

Jemima's pa repeated it.

Mr. Haydon looked puzzled, but he was a man of resources. He threw back his head and closed his eyes, clasped James George close, and said, in loud, clear tones:

"Jane Georgie, I dedicate you to the service of the church of your fathers. May you be the mother of a strong race of men—"

But here Jemima's pa interrupted him. He caught his sleeve and brought him back to earth by a penetrating whisper: "*James George.*"

Mr. Haydon started as if wakened from a dream, and said: "James George—I thought he was a girl. Praise the Lord."

Then, taking a fresh hold on Jemima, he again closed his eyes and said in tones of triumph:

"Glory be, a man-child I bring before Thine altar. James George, may thou be a valiant soldier of the cross and of thy country. May thou always be foremost in the ranks, ever ready to face the cannon's mouth, and shed thy blood for thy country. May thou not shudder at gushing wounds—"

But at this point Jemima's ma almost fainted. Jemima's pa had to carry her out. This left Mr. Haydon in sole possession of Jemima Georgina. He loved babies, but he liked to have their parents near. His responsibility made him nervous, and leaving the baby with his "gushing wounds on the field of battle," he reached for the bowl of water. It was up on top of the pulpit. Mr. Haydon's cuff-button caught on the edge; the bowl tottered, slipped and fell, the whole contents going straight in James George's face.

James George shivered, gasped two or three times, and then opened her mouth full capacity and uttered a strong note of protest. Mr. Haydon looked helplessly at the three couples still standing before him. The three women were quieting their babies, and when he extended James George the three men backed up. Two of them put their hands

in their pockets. The other man put his hands behind him and looked earnestly out the window.

James George kept on protesting. The three couples were waiting for the final prayer. This was always Mr. Haydon's supreme effort. He looked forward to it. In it he told the Lord a few things about his congregation that he did not care to tell them direct. But with dripping, protesting James George in his arms he forgot everything. He failed in an effort to maintain the dignity of the occasion by closing with the benediction. Instead he shouted: "God bless you, go!" And without waiting to see what they were going to do about it, he put James George down on the floor and ran for her parents.

He found Jemima's ma and pa in the vestry. Jemima's ma was moaning that evil would come of it all, and Jemima's pa looked dejected. Mr. Haydon did not wait to inquire into the trouble, but as quickly as he could he started them off home, the parents haunted by fears they could not express, and James George using all her strength to protest against things in general and christening in particular.

It was just a year and eleven months later that Jemima's pa went into the office of the Board of Health again. Another clerk was at the desk, and the big man with the big ring and the watch chain was not in sight. Jemima's pa described him and insisted that his business was such that he must see him. The clerk went to an inner office and brought him out. The big man smiled as soon as he saw Jemima's pa, and shook hands with him.

"I would like to see you on a very important private matter," Jemima's pa said.

"Come into my office," the big man said, and led the way.

As soon as they were in and the door was closed, Jemima's pa said: "James George was born yesterday."

"God bless my soul!" the big

man said. "What name had you?"

"Mary Jane," said Jemima's pa sheepishly.

"Shake," said the big man solemnly, "I am married now, and Martin Oscar was born last week."

"What do you call him?" Jemima's pa asked eagerly.

"Margaret Oscara," the big man said.

The men looked at each other in silence for a minute and then Jemima's pa said, "Aint it the devil?"

"Yes, but Martin Oscar may be next," the big man said hopefully.

"I wish I had kept James George for him," Jemima's pa said. "That is what I really came to see you about. It wont be handy to have two called James George in the family, especially so close together. And of course he must have it. I wont have him robbed even by his sister. Now what can I do?"

The big man thought awhile. "You might get an act of the legislature," he said. "It has authority to change names."

"That was what the lawyer said," Jemima's pa acknowledged; "but maybe



He put James George down on the floor and ran for his parents.

I could not get it, and James George must have a name. Isn't there an easier way?"

"I can't think of anything else," the big man said.

"If I could get it fixed here," Jemima's pa said hesitatingly, "it would be all right. You see, she was never rightly christened. The preacher got the name mixed; her ma fainted; and the water was spilled; and the prayer wasn't ever rightly said. I often thought I'd have it done over again."

"What do you mean?" the big man asked.

"I thought maybe we could change the name on the book," Jemima's pa said in a whisper.

The big man looked shocked. "But what you ask is against the law," he said. "I could not do that, but I am sorry for you."

"Thank you," Jemima's pa said feelingly. "I'll see that James George does well by Martin Oscar. I am going to see that he has a good position—a lawyer or governor or judge or something, and a little influence will not hurt Martin Oscar."

The big man was affected. He put out his hand and said, "I believe you, and for the sake of my boy, his father is going to break the law. Be outside at eight o'clock to-night. Don't let anyone see you come."

At eight, Jemima's pa crept out of the shadow of a building near the Board of Health office and joined the big man.

"A policeman is watching me," Jemima's pa said. "I had to hide three times. I never saw so many policemen."

"Neither did I," the big man acknowledged. "Who is that?"

Jemima's pa looked. A man was slink-

ing down the street in the shade of the buildings. Whenever he heard anyone coming he hid until they passed.

"It's probably a burglar," the big man said.

The burglar was on the steps beside them before he noticed Jemima's pa and the big man. He stopped as if shot, and the big man recognized him. "Mason, what are you doing here?" he said.

"I didn't mean any harm," the newcomer said. "I just wanted to see a book."

"Come inside," the big man said, and walked boldly up and opened the door. The other two followed. When inside, the big man switched on the light, and

Jemima's pa recognized the newcomer as the clerk he had talked to nearly two years before.

"Now, Mason, explain," the big man said.

The clerk hesitated; then, looking at Jemima's pa, he said: "He will understand. I have five girls, and William Henry was born this morning."

"What name had you chosen?"

both men asked of him.

"Wilhelmina Henrietta," the clerk said, "and all the rest are something like that."

"What a lot of disappointments you have had," the big man said sympathetically. "How many do you wish to change?"

"Just the last one," the clerk said.

The big man walked to the back of the office, and took down a big book. He and the clerk searched for a while, and then the clerk wrote something. As he wrote, a wonderful smile broke over his face and he turned to Jemima's pa and said, "I guess you'll be glad some day that I feminized James George?"

"Did you?" both men said at once.



"Certainly I did."

Jemima's pa almost threw his arms around his neck. The big man patted his shoulder. "James George will always use his influence for Martin Oscar and William Henry. I see a great future for them."

"So do I," said the big man.

"So do I," said the clerk.

"Then come and have a cigar," Jemima's pa said, and he caught the other two by the arms. As they left the building a policeman came up to inquire what they had been doing in the Health Board offices.

Jemima's pa caught him by the arm and said confidentially, "We're just going to celebrate for James George, Martin Oscar and William Henry. Come along."

"Have you all got little kids?" the policeman asked with interest.

The three men nodded.

"All boys?"

"Well, Martin Oscar hasn't come yet, but he is expected any time," Jemima's pa said reluctantly.

"Gosh, but I'd like to go with you," the policeman said, "for a kid arrived at my place just before I left."

"What name?" the three men asked at once.

"He just arrived," the policeman said, "and we haven't had time to get a name yet."

"Isn't it the devil?" the three men said.

"You might feminize it," the clerk said.

"What would I feminize him for?" the policeman asked.

"Is it a boy?" Jemima's pa asked.

"Sure it is, and as fine a one as you ever saw," the policeman said.

"Didn't you have a name?" the big man asked.

"No; how the deuce do you suppose I could tell whether it would be a male or a female?"

"You must have a cigar on me," the clerk said.

"Come with me," the big man said.

"No, I insist," Jemima's pa said, leading the way.



Mr. and Mrs. Convict 6636

by Frederick
R. Bechdolt

Co-Author of "9009,"

Author of "Lighthouse Tom," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM OBERHARDT

IT was October, the first Thursday in the month. Within the office of the captain of the guard, hard by the prison's main gate, a cheerful fire was blazing. Two trusties were working on some books. Apart from these, but in plain sight of them and a blue-clad guard, Tompkins—Convict 6636—was having his monthly "reception." This privilege, earned by keeping within the rules, was shared by Tompkins' visitor, his wife.

In ordinary clothes and in ordinary life, Tompkins would pass unnoticed among a crowd—a medium sized man with grey streaks in his hair and several deep lines on his face. He sat there leaning a little forward, talking quickly and with a sort of nervous catch in his voice. His eyes hung on the woman.

A great patience was in the face of Tompkins' wife, a worn face as full of repression as her monotonous voice. She held her hands on her lap, with her fingers doubled under her palms, a position which hid the too-often mended holes in her black cotton gloves.

Take it all in all, they looked like an average pair, as pairs go in these prison "receptions." She was just shabby enough; her features showed just the proper ravages from abiding grief. He was just full enough of promise for better things.

They were talking quietly enough there in the corner of the room—talking

quietly of little things, and falling into awkward silences. It is hard for man and wife to converse freely when they see each other at thirty-day intervals in the office of the captain of the guard, when they know none of life's sweet intimacies, when they cannot share each other's lives any more.

At the end of a long pause she spoke of the two children.

"They're growing so fast; it keeps me busy making over things," she said in her flat, weary voice.

He reached out his hand so that the sleeve of his striped convict coat lay on her narrow lap of faded black, and he stroked her gloved fingers. She went on telling him about the children's schooling.

An average pair and an average reception. And yet—

There is a big book in every prison. In that book is entered every convict's name. Opposite the name are certain entries. One space is devoted to the names of regular visitors, whom that convict may expect. As visitors call the date is noted. And—

On the average, at the end of two years, a man's wife ceases to call. A little later she stops writing. Sisters last longer, mothers longest. But wives stop—on the average—at the end of two years. Exceptions last as long as three. It is a fact. It is written down. It has been written down in cold ink on cold

paper thousands of times. A rule of life as life in prison goes.

There is no need to speculate over causes, nor to picture countless drab tragedies slowly ground out to their final acts. There is only need to remember now that Tompkins' wife was visiting him. And Tompkins had been here one month more than four years. She had outlasted them all.

She sat there talking of the children. From school-books she drifted to the subject of new rubbers—for it was raining outside. Bravely she was keeping her heart's secrets to herself.

"I do hope it won't be a hard winter. You know what a bad time they both had last year with colds." She sighed, and there was another silence. Then she went on to tell him of her new place. She was doing housework for small wages.

"It's walking distance from home; and the free market is on the way," she said.

Tompkins nodded and cleared his throat as if he wished to speak. The guard was folding up the paper which he had been reading. Tompkins glanced over toward him, then up at the clock.



She sat there talking of the children. From school books she drifted to the subject of new rubbers—

Their time by all rights had already expired.

The last time she had visited him—one month ago—he had started to bring up this subject which was now in his mind. But she had seemed eager then to speak of the children's school-books. He well remembered. Now he was determined. He leaned further forward and he touched her on the arm.

"You know," he said and stopped for that eager catch which was like an in-drawn breath, "my time—it's half way up in two months. The warden's been good to me. I could make parole. Don't you think—"

He paused and looked at her. She was staring down at the floor and picking nervously at her dress. As if the silence had awakened her, she turned her eyes to his.

"Yes," she said, "I know." Then she spoke hurriedly of the weather.

The rain was loud on the window panes. Through its noise came the rattle of wheels on gravel. It was the prison bus. She rose at once. He rose, and in silence they went together to the door. They paused upon the threshold. She turned her face to him and they kissed each other. He watched her climb into the covered bus. Then he saw the vehicle lurch away through sheets of falling rain.

The days went by; the weeks dragged on. Tompkins did his work as usual.

Tompkins was a trusty. He worked in the office of the state prison board. He had been a defaulting bookkeeper before he wore stripes. In stripes he compiled accounts and wrote out data for the prison board, which met here once every month. There were many figures to set down; for the prison had its complicated finance of production and expense. There were also, as the date for the board meeting drew near, many human statistics whose compilation on separate sheets of paper was Tompkins' duty.

These latter took the form of brief biographies; they dealt with the candidates for parole—little histories of the men, their crimes, their prospects for

fitness to meet the world. Tompkins was busy on them by the end of October, sitting down at a typewriter, putting on paper the facts which would give other men their freedom.

The office of the state prison board was in a building outside the walls. The windows commanded a wide view. Below them lay an arm of a great bay; beyond the salt water, tall, grassy hills, crowned with timber, rolled away: a fine, clean, open world.

Tompkins wrote out the stories of fellow-convicts who would go forth into that world. He typed many separate items of "employment guaranteed." Knowing the work of old, he was able to pick successful candidates; and he was able to tell those who were not fit.

He sat there at his typewriter, bending over it, stoop-shouldered, with the grey streaks in his hair and the deep lines on his face. He worked hard.

But there were times when he rested. And at these times he turned in his chair; he stared out of the windows, across the salt water, at the tall, rolling hills. He stared at the world, for which he had longed. And the lines in his face showed pain and dumb perplexity.

He had planned toward his parole for a long time. He had given the fond project his thought through sleepless nights. Things had looked so good for him. And then—

She had avoided his eyes, had changed the subject with a strange awkwardness!

Sometimes, when he was writing forth an item of "Employment Guaranteed," Tompkins remembered how eagerly he had planned that she should get work for him—a hope based on her steadfastness, her patient faithfulness. When that memory came, he would find himself abandoning the typewriter keys, shifting his position unconsciously, staring out of the window at the World for which he longed.

Then he would come back to himself; he would resume his work, his thin shoulders bowing over the typewriter, his long fingers hurrying over the keys.

And so October drew to a close and November came.

During these first nights in November, Tompkins was fighting against his thoughts. In his cell, he stared into the thick, narrow dark, at the mercy of his own mind.

"Why had she acted in this manner?"

Although he struggled against it, his mind persisted in bringing an answer before him.

For Tompkins knew the grim rule which that huge book had proven ten thousand times. She had outlasted them all.

Tompkins knew—as the warden knew and the officials knew and the convicts knew—that two years is the average; and exceptions last three years. And she had been coming four years and one month!

The soul-racking fear, the dread of many a long, sleepless night, the restless glancing through the office window when the rattle of wheels said the prison bus was coming, the sickening grip at his heart on those occasions when she had been slow in emerging from the covered vehicle—all these were a part of the things which Tompkins had undergone in the past. He had suffered; and then he had emerged from suffering. For she had stuck by him, contrary to the rule.

Now all of this came back again. And as November began, it came back ten-fold.

The first Thursday in November was on the sixth of the month. During the five preceding days Tompkins seemed to shrink in stature; and his eyes appeared larger because of the gaunting of his cheeks. He made small mistakes in his work.

Thursday came. Tompkins toiled that morning on his typewriter. He did not stare through the window. He held himself to the keys, rigidly, as if he feared to look up. Noon passed; afternoon drew on.

At three o'clock the rattle of wheels on hard gravel proclaimed the prison bus.

It would stop near the window. Always it had stopped there. Always he had seen her alight with other passengers. There had been a wait; then the trusty from the warden's office had

always entered with the slip of paper authorizing to Tompkins a "reception."

The rattling stopped. Tompkins arose from his chair. He stepped over to the window. He looked at the yawning, cavern-like interior of the bus. Some one was emerging—a woman. Tompkins felt a drop of perspiration rolling down from his forehead and over his cheek. He did not wait long. This woman was one whom he had never seen before. And now the bus was rolling on again.

She had not come.

Well, she had come for two years longer than the most of them; and for one year longer than the best of them. And now she had stopped. Tompkins went slowly back to his chair and sat down to type out the memorandum of another parole case.

Curiously enough, despair came to him like a relief. Waiting had been a weary ordeal.

The prison board met on the second Monday of the month. During the three intervening days, Tompkins became more and more like a machine.

On the first day after her failure to arrive, he was sitting at his work when the bus made its morning trip. As if the rattle of wheels had been a signal, he rose abruptly and went to the window. When the vehicle went on again, Tompkins stared dully after it. In the afternoon he did the same thing. But on Saturday, the second day, the noise of the wheels on the gravel driveway only made him start. He continued sitting, bent over his typewriter.

That day, when a trusty brought in the mail, Tompkins looked up, and his eyes followed the packet of letters while the trusty sorted them. But the mail contained no missive for him.

On Sunday, the third day, Tompkins finished his odds and ends of work, mechanically. And like some mechanism he spoke to those about him. His voice was flat, as he bade the warden good-morning. He was not brooding. He was numb. He was certain now that she was never going to come.

If the warden and the clerk of the


board looked oddly at him, Tompkins did not see it. It needed all his will to go on, machine-like, with his work.

Monday afternoon the prison board met—five men, whose clothing proclaimed their prosperity, whose faces showed their honorable standing, whose bearing was above all things confident. Middle-aged men, *they* had been victorious in their battles out there in the world.

They greeted Tompkins with kind familiarity; he bade each of them good-afternoon, speaking the name of each. They hung their hats and overcoats in his office, and they passed on to the inner room to hold their session. He knew that they did these things and that he spoke to them, because it was all customary.

His memory retained no actual details.

The office where Tompkins worked was a middle room. While the board was assembling in the inner room,



Tompkins was fighting against his thought. In his cell he stared in to the thick, narrow dark, at the mercy of his own mind. "Why had she acted in this manner?" His mind persisted in bringing an answer.

another gathering was being marshaled in an outside apartment. A striped line of fifty convicts filed into the chamber, the candidates for parole. They seated themselves in chairs, all ranged side by side next to the wall. Although speech was allowed among them, they were like convicts under a grim, silent system. And one or two were mopping perspiration from their foreheads as they sat there—dumb.

The board heard cases in alphabetical order. "Anderson!" called the warden, referring to his file clip. Tompkins, who had been standing like a footman by the open door of their room, now walked quickly across his office to the closed door, which shut the convicts from hearing what was going on. He opened that portal: "Anderson!" he called.

The eyes of all the striped line focused first on Tompkins, then swiftly swerved to a gray-haired life-terminer sitting at their end. The man swallowed as if in a final effort to get something stubborn down his throat, rose with a sort of jerk, and followed Tompkins' gesture to the last room. Tompkins closed the door upon the line of candidates.

The five members of the board sat behind their desks; the desks were arranged in an L. Within the angle of the L there was a single chair. The convict took this chair; and they questioned him—about himself, his case, and his prospects of going forth to meet the world again.

Tompkins stood near the door and heard the answers.

"I'm sick of all this crooked graft. I learned my lesson, Sir." Then, a moment later: "If I ever get out of here, God knows I'll try."

When the last question had been put and answered, Tompkins saw the life-terminer pass back to the outer room. The door closed behind Anderson. Then there was brief debate.

So it went: one candidate, then another, and then more. Tompkins saw them face the board, and he heard their answers. Many were like the first one: they had learned their lesson; they wanted to try again.

Their words hardly reached Tompkins' mind now. He was thinking of his own parole. He had learned *his* lesson. He knew that. But the parole! He had lost that chance. He was thinking of his wife, who had outlasted them all—and then had gone with the rest of them. Gone just as he had begun to hope!

The afternoon wore on. The board went down the list. Tompkins called many men. They were somewhere in the *N's*. He was gazing through the window now at the wide world.

Out on the gray bay, rain was coming on, before a wind. Tompkins saw a small sloop racing ahead of the storm. Mechanically his eyes followed the craft. He knew it of old; it belonged to the fisherman down in the little town a half-mile away. To Tompkins that boat was a symbol of the freedom for which he had hoped, coming and going with the great winds. Now it swept shoreward like a homing bird. Tompkins saw the fisherman as he climbed out and tied the painter to the little landing stage, then walked away to the village.

Soon afterward darkness came on, and the rain. And then the board took a recess for dinner.

It was storming hard when the members of the prison board re-assembled. Again they hung their hats and overcoats in the office where Tompkins worked. Out in the ante-room, the striped line, now much shrunk, awaited judgment.

The warden was a few minutes late. Some one had called him to the long-distance telephone. When he arrived the board was ready for the next case. They started briskly.

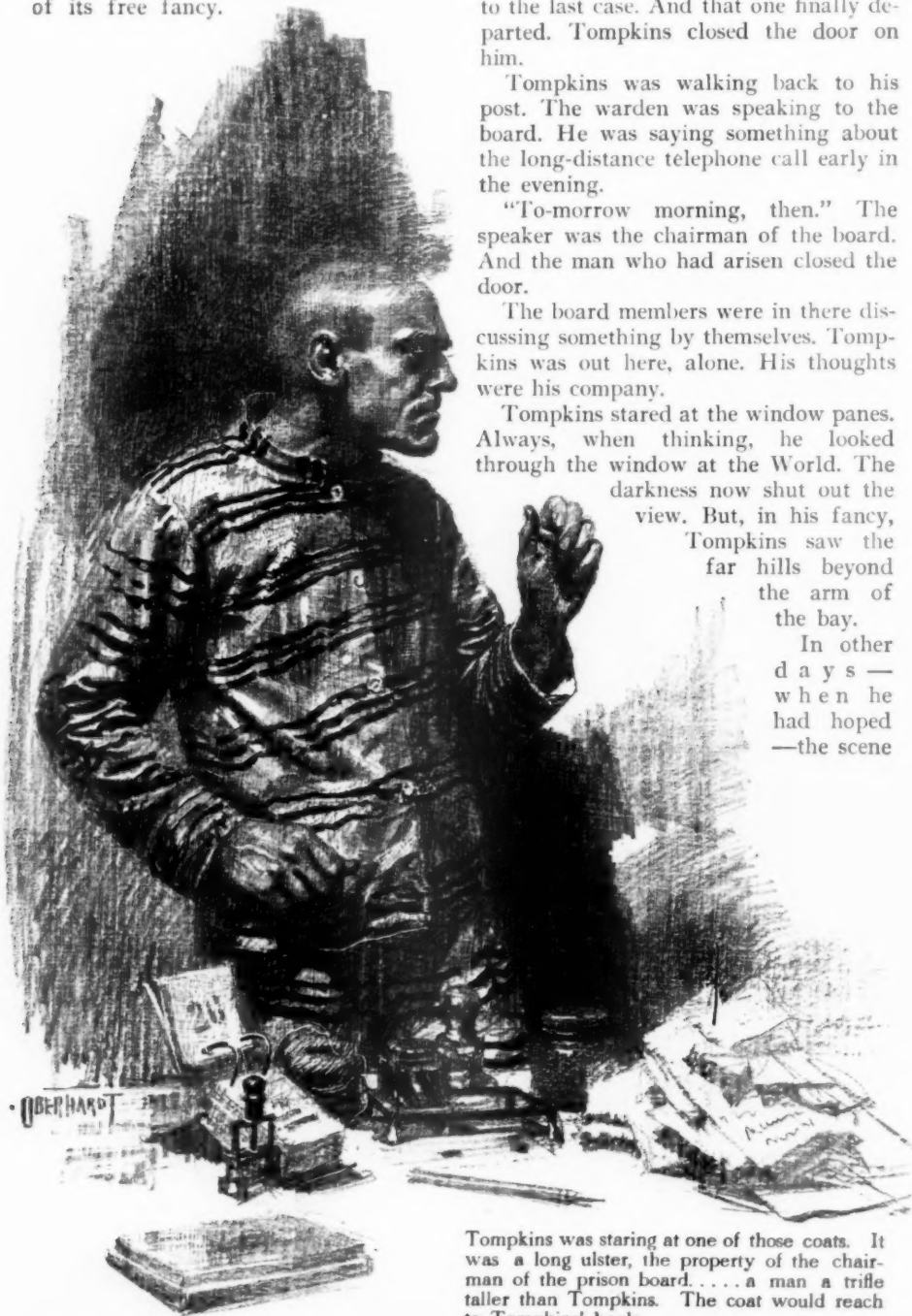
One after another the hearings went on. Tompkins paid no heed now. He only heard the calling of new candidates; and, as he summoned each of these, he acted more than ever like a piece of mechanism.

This evening the fact was coming home to him. She would never come to visit him again. He was certain of it now.

He did not blame his wife; he could not blame his wife; she had done better

than any of them. But it was hard.

Like an automaton he did his work; his body moved. And his mind roved on of its free fancy.



The night was dark; the storm was rising outside. Here, under the glow of lamps, the board heard the list through to the last case. And that one finally departed. Tompkins closed the door on him.

Tompkins was walking back to his post. The warden was speaking to the board. He was saying something about the long-distance telephone call early in the evening.

"To-morrow morning, then." The speaker was the chairman of the board. And the man who had arisen closed the door.

The board members were in there discussing something by themselves. Tompkins was out here, alone. His thoughts were his company.

Tompkins stared at the window panes. Always, when thinking, he looked through the window at the World. The darkness now shut out the view. But, in his fancy, Tompkins saw the far hills beyond the arm of the bay.

In other days — when he had hoped — the scene

Tompkins was staring at one of those coats. It was a long ulster, the property of the chairman of the prison board. . . . a man a trifle taller than Tompkins. The coat would reach to Tompkins' heels.

had brought visions of what was to be: His life at home, with her, fighting his way back in the World. Now those visions came only as stabbing reminders of what might have been.

He stood near the door. The buzz of voices on the other side did not reach his mind. His fancy went over that wide landscape—his daily view of the unwall'd world.

He saw the ever-changing bay. He saw again the sloop, racing home before the storm. He saw it where the fisherman had left it tied, riding up and down on the swells—free to come and go. Thus he had always thought of it, as he had seen it scudding back and forth: free to come and go, *free to come and go!*

The storm yelled savagely outside. A black, wet night. Involuntarily Tompkins glanced about the lighted room. His eyes went over the familiar objects. They came to the row of hanging overcoats. They stopped.

Tompkins was staring at one of those coats. It was a long ulster, the property of the chairman of the prison board. He stood as if he had been made of stone. His head was thrust forward; his eyes were wide.

The chairman of the board was perhaps a trifle taller than Tompkins. The coat would reach to Tompkins' heels. And there was the hat.

Then Tompkins saw again the sloop of the fisherman, tethered to the little

landing stage a half-mile away. *Free to come and go!*

His eyes began to narrow and his mouth became ugly.

The hat and coat. The storm outside. The guards in their towers peering into the sheeted rain. The county road running by this building, toward the little town. Down there, half a mile away, the sloop. There lay the world. Here—

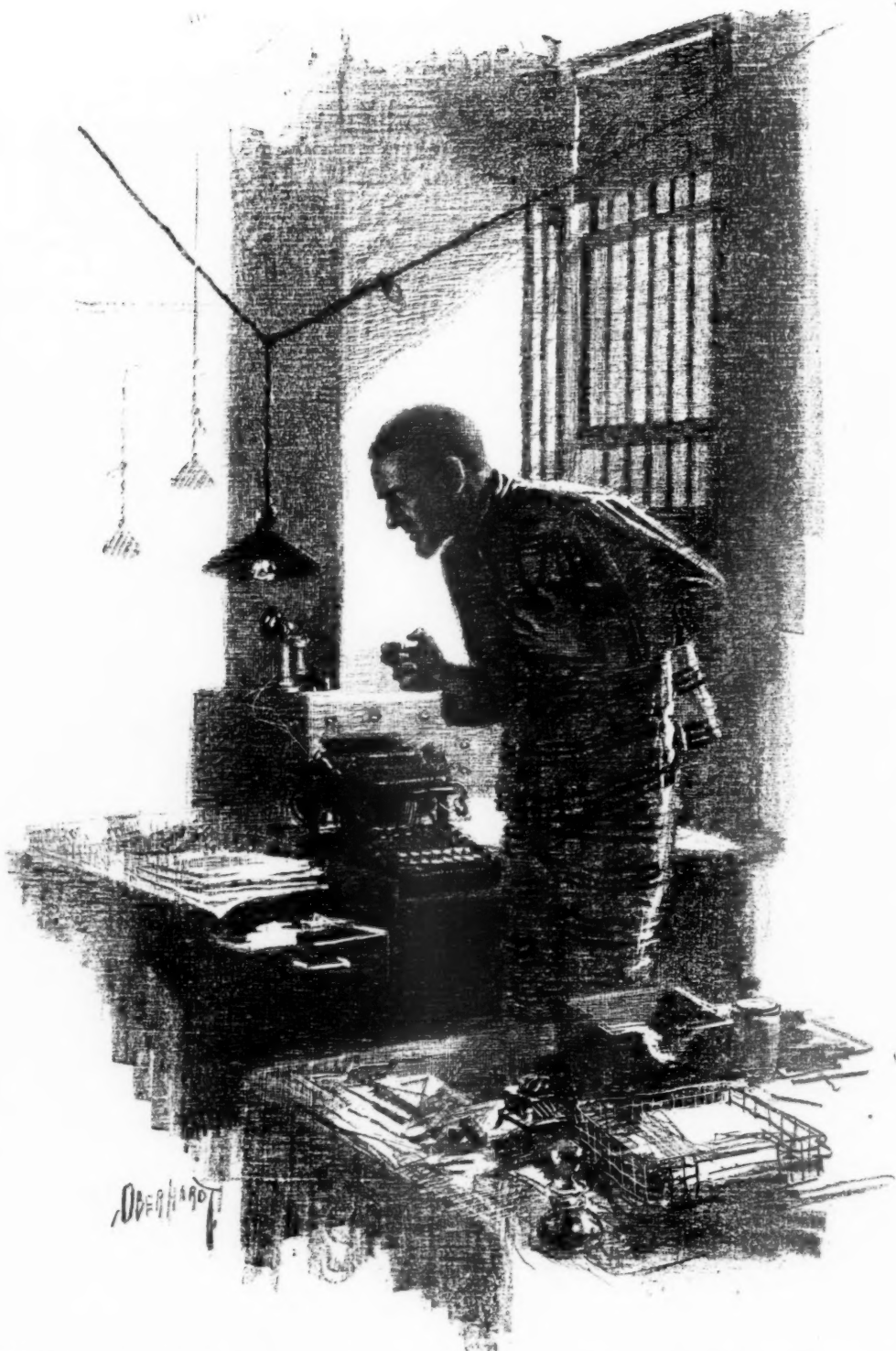
The last candidate had gone. The board had shut the door on Tompkins. He was alone.

Like all other convicts, he had spent some months tortured by plans for escape. He had fought against the plans. He had, long since, forgotten them. But now—

Now he saw nothing to fight for.

And all his black despair vanished in this moment. The numbness went away from him. He felt strangely alive. Something like fiery liquor was racing through his veins. He stood rigid; and his blood beat fast. He reveled in the pictures—

Here alone, unseen by any man, he was putting on the hat and overcoat. Now he was walking out through the door, now walking down the road. The guards in their towers were seeing him pass. And those guards knew both hat and coat. He saw himself meeting one of them in the road,



At times Tompkins' hand shook strangely. His face was white. He seemed like one overpowered by physical weariness.

saw the man saluting him. He saw his progress, step by step—down to the landing. He saw himself untying the little sloop.

And Tompkins was taking his first step toward the garments hanging there upon the wall. That movement awakened him. He halted. His face hung to that new ugly expression. The eyes were narrow; the lips were grim.

There passed now some thirty seconds. During that interval Tompkins did not move. But slowly—and to Tompkins that battle was deadly slow—the expression of his features changed again. The eyes began to widen; the lips became less grim—straighter and more firm.

Four years and two months hoping for parole, working for parole! Prison had given Tompkins a will, to repress.

At last the struggle ended. Tompkins walked heavily to his chair and sat limp by his typewriter. When the warden opened the door of the inner room and saw him sitting there, clutching the desk, the official nodded cheerfully.

"All right, Tompkins," said he, "you may go now."

Tompkins arose and nodded. "Good night, Warden," he said; and went out.

He walked swiftly through the beating rain to the prison's main gate. The blue-clad man at the portal glanced at him and checked off his name. A guard went with him to his cell and locked him in.

At nine o'clock the next morning, the prison board resumed its session. There were a number of fiscal matters which needed attention. Tompkins stood near the door, awaiting any summons. Occasionally the warden asked him for papers or books.

Tompkins answered to these demands, moving like a man who is in a trance. At times his hands shook strangely. His face was white. He seemed like one overpowered by physical weariness.

At half past nine the rattle of wheels sounded on the gravel driveway outside. Instinctively Tompkins glanced toward the window. Habit gets to be a mighty

thing in prison. At once he lowered his eyes to the carpet. He had remembered.

The bus went on. In the outer office where the striped line had waited the day before, Tompkins now heard a quick footstep. The door of that office flew open. Tompkins saw his wife.

He stumbled slightly as he started toward her. His two arms went out.

"Oh Jim!" She choked as she cried his name. Dully he noted that her face was pinched and worn. And in a dazed way he saw there was a great happiness there.

The warden came quickly into the room. He passed Tompkins; he walked up to Tompkins' wife. The two of them exchanged three or four words, while Tompkins stood, his two arms still outstretched. Then the warden went back again into the board room.

She came to Tompkins; and, although she was in his arms, she had to use her strength to steady him.

"Why—?" He was groping to understand it. Something had happened. He did not know the agony of reproach that was in his voice.

"You don't know?" she cried. "You didn't guess?"

He shook his head and he repeated the monosyllable, "Why—?"

"Listen, dear." She gripped his arms in her worn fingers and looked up at him. "It's your parole."

He shook his head. "My parole," he repeated dully. "I didn't come up."

"The warden,"—she spoke swiftly now—"he has three. You know, three he can give, himself, at the end of the year. He promised me yours two months ago. But I had to get work for you. And it took me—" She faltered and sighed wearily. "It took me longer than I thought. So I didn't come. I telephoned him last night. I had the job for you. He said he'd hold it over until to-day."

She smiled, but the tears were dropping over her worn cheeks.

"I didn't want to tell you—for fear it might go wrong. But now it's—Jim, kiss me, dear—it's all right now. You'll be home in a week."

Tompkins bent his head, and he kissed her.



The **P**ASSIONATE

A Novel of the English Aristocracy

I WANT very much to set down my thoughts and my experiences of life. I want to do so now that I have come to middle age and now that my attitudes are all defined and my personal drama worked out. And I have a story. I have lived through things that have searched me.

I want to tell that story as well as I can while I am still a clear-headed and active man, and while many details that may presently become blurred and altered are still rawly fresh in my mind. And to one person in particular do I wish to think I am writing, and that is

to you, my only son. I want to write my story not indeed to the child you are now, but to the man you are going to be.

The idea of writing such a book as this came to me first as I sat by the dead body of your grandfather—my father. It was because I wanted so greatly such a book from him that I am now writing this.

At one time he had been my greatest friend. He had never indeed talked to me about himself or his youth, but he had always showed an extraordinary sympathy and helpfulness for me in all the confusion and perplexities into which I fell. This did not last to the end



FRIENDS *by* H. G. Wells

Illustrated by
John Newton Howitt

Author of "Marriage," "Mr. Polly,"
"Ann Veronica," etc.

of his life. There came an illness, an operation, and he rose from it ailing, suffering, dwarfed and altogether changed.

Suddenly he was a changeling, a being querulous and pitiful, needing indulgence and sacrifices. In a little while I ceased to consider him as a man to whom one told things, of whom one could expect help or advice. We all ceased to consider him at all in that way. We humored him, put pleasant things before him, concealed whatever was disagreeable.

So when I came to look at his dead face at last, it was with something like

amazement that I perceived him grave and beautiful—more grave and beautiful than he had been even in the fullness of life.

The flatly painted portrait of his father, my grandfather, hanging there in the stillness above the coffin, looking out on the world he had left with steady, humorous blue eyes that followed one about the room—that, too, was revived, touched into reality and participation by this and that, became a living presence at a conference of lives.

There we were, three Strattons together, and down in the dining-room were steel engravings to take us back

two generations further, and we had all lived full lives, suffered, attempted, signified. I had a glimpse of the long successions of mankind.

What a huge, inaccessible lumber-room of thought and experience we amounted to, I thought; how much we are, how little we transmit. Each one of us was but a variation, an experiment upon the Stratton theme.

Man is a creature becoming articulate, and why should those men have left so much of the tale untold—to be lost and forgotten? Why must we all repeat things done, and come again very bitterly to wisdom our fathers have achieved before us? My grandfather there should have left me something better than the still enigma of his watching face.

All my life so far has gone in learning very painfully what many men have learned before me; I have spent the greater part of forty years in finding a sort of purpose for the uncertain and declining decades that remain.

Is it not time the generations drew together and helped one another? Cannot we begin now to make a better use of the experiences of life so that our sons may not waste themselves so much? Cannot we gather into books that men may read in an hour or so the gist of these confused and multitudinous realities of the individual career? Surely the time is coming for that, when a new private literature will exist, and fathers and mothers behind their rôle of rulers, protectors, and supporters, will prepare frank and intimate records of their thought and their feeling, told as one tells things to equals, without authority or reserves or discretions, so that, they being dead, their children may rediscover them as contemporaries and friends.

For me this book I contemplate is a need. I am just a year and a half from a bitter tragedy and the loss of a friend as dear as life to me. It is very constantly in my mind. She opened her mind to me as few people open their minds to anyone. In a way, little Stephen, she made her greatest sacrifice for you. And I am so placed that I have no one to

talk to quite freely about her. The one other person to whom I talk, I cannot talk to about her; it is strange, seeing how we love and trust one another, but so it is; you will understand that the better as this story unfolds.

I would like very much to begin by giving you a portrait of the Lady Mary Christian as she was in the days when our love was born. Every portrait I ever had of her I burned in the sincerity of what was to have been our final separation, and now I have nothing of her in my possession. I suppose that in the files of illustrated weeklies somewhere, a score of portraits must be findable. Yet photographs have a queer quality of falsehood. They have no movement, and always there was a little movement about Mary, just as there is always a little scent about flowers.

She was slender and graceful, so that she seemed taller than she was; she had beautifully shaped arms and a brightness in her face: it seemed to me always that there was light in her face, more than the light that shone upon it. Her fair, very slightly reddish hair—it was warm like Australian gold—flowed with a sort of joyous bravery back from her low, broad forehead; the color under her delicate skin was bright and quick, and her mouth always smiled faintly.

There was a peculiar charm for me about her mouth, a whimsicality, a sort of humorous resolve in the way in which the upper lip fell upon the lower and in a faint obliquity that increased with her quickening smile. She spoke with a very clear, delicate intonation that made one want to hear her speak again; she often said faintly daring things, and when she did, she had that little catch in the breath—of one who dares. She did not talk hastily; often before she spoke came a brief grave pause.

Her eyes were brightly blue, except when the spirit of mischief took her and then they became black, and there was something about the upper and lower lids that made them not only the prettiest but the sweetest and kindest eyes in the world. And she moved with a



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THE
LADY
MARY

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quiet rapidity, without any needless movements, to do whatever she had a mind to do....

But how impossible it is to convey the personal charm of a human being! I catalogue these things, and it is as if she moved about silently behind my stumbling enumeration and smiled at me still, with her eyes a little darkened, mocking me.

We grew up together. The girl of nineteen mingles in my memory with the woman of twenty-five.

Always we were equals, or if anything, she was the better of us two. I never made love to her in the commoner sense of the word, a sense in which the woman is conceived of as shy, unawakened, younger, more plastic, and the man as tempting, creating responses, persuading and compelling. We made love to each other as youth should; we were friends lighted by a passion.... I think that is the best love.

If I could wish your future I would have you love some one neither older and stronger nor younger and weaker than yourself. I would have you have neither a toy nor a devotion, for the one makes the woman contemptible and the other the man. There should be something almost sisterly between you. Love neither a goddess nor a captive woman. But I would wish you a better fate in your love than chanced to me.

II

I WAS a Harbury boy as my father and grandfather were before me and as you are presently to be. I went to Harbury at the age of fourteen. Until then I was educated at home. My father became Rector of Burnmore when I was nine; my mother had been dead four years, and my second cousin, Jane Stratton, was already his house-keeper. My father held the living until his resignation when I was nearly thirty. So that all the most impressionable years of my life center upon the Burnmore rectory and the easy spaciousness of Burnmore Park.

My memories of the Park are all under blue sky and sunshine, with just a thunderstorm or so; beautiful green

marshes, a number of vividly interesting meres upon the course of its stream, and a wealth of gigantic oaks. The meres lay at various levels, and the hand of Lady Ladislaw, Lady Mary's mother, had assisted nature in their enrichment with lilies. There were places of sedge and scented rush, amidst which were sapphire mists of forget-me-not for long stretches, skirmishing commandoes of yellow iris and wide wastes of floating water-lilies. The gardens passed insensibly into the Park, and beyond the house were broad stretches of grass, sun-lighted, barred with the deep-green shadows of great trees, and animated with groups and lines of fallow deer. Near the house was an Italianate garden, with balustradings and statuary, and a great wealth of roses and flowering shrubs.....

I find it quite impossible now to recall the steps and stages by which the power of sex invaded my life. It seems to me that it began very much as a gale begins, in catpaws upon the water and little rustlings among the leaves, and then stillness, and then a distant souging again and a pause, and then a wider and longer disturbance, and so more and more, with a gathering continuity, until at last the stars were hidden, the heavens were hidden; all the heights and depths of life were obscured by stormy impulses and desires.

I think perhaps that my boyhood was exceptionally free from vulgarizing influences. I fell in love once or twice, but these earliest experiences rarely got beyond a sort of dumb awe, a vague, vast, ineffectual desire for self-immolation. For a time I remember I worshiped Lady Ladislaw, with all my being. Then I talked to a girl in a train—I forget upon what journey—but I remember very vividly her quick color and a certain roguish smile. I spread my adoration at her feet, fresh and frank. I wanted to write to her. Indeed, I wanted to devote all my being to her. I begged hard, but there was some one called Auntie who had to be considered, an Atropos for that thread of romance.

Then there was a photograph in my father's study of the Delphic Sibyl from the Sistine Chapel, that for a time held

my heart, and—yes, there was a girl in a tobacconist's shop in the Harbury High Street. Drawn by an irresistible impulse, I used to go and buy cigarettes—and sometimes converse about the weather. But afterwards in solitude I would meditate tremendous conversations and encounters with her. Almost always I suppose there is that girl in the tobacconist's shop. . . .

I believe if I made an effort I could disinter some dozens of such memories, more and more faded, until the marginal ones would be featureless and all but altogether effaced. As I look back at it now, I am struck by an absurd image: it is as if a fish nibbled at this bait and then at that.

Given but the slightest aid from accidental circumstances, and any of those slight attractions might have become a power to deflect all my life.

The day of decision arrived when the Lady Mary Christian came smiling out of the sunshine to me into the pavilion at Burnmore. With that the phase of stirrings and intimations was over forever in my life. All those other impressions went then to the dusty lumber room from which I now so slightly disinter them.

III

WE five had all been playmates together. There were Lord Maxton, who later was to be killed at Paardeberg while I was in Ladysmith—he was my senior by nearly a year; Philip, who now has become Earl Ladislav and who was about eighteen months younger than I; Mary, my contemporary within eight days; and Guy, whom we regarded as a baby and who was called, apparently on account of some early linguistic efforts, "Brugglesmith."

As a youth, I had more imagination than Maxton and was a good deal better read, so that Mary and I dominated most of the games of Indians and warfare and exploration in which we passed our long days together. When the Christians were at Burnmore, and they usually spent three or four months in the year there, I had a kind of standing in-

itation to be with them. Sometimes there would also be two Christian cousins to swell our party, and sometimes there would be a raid of the Fawney children with a detestable governess who was perpetually vociferating reproaches, but these latter were absent-minded, lax young persons, and we did not greatly love them.

It is curious how little I remember of Mary's childhood. All that has happened between us since lies between that and my present self like some luminous, impenetrable mist. I know we liked each other, that I was taller than she was and thought her legs unreasonably thin, and that once when I knelt by accident on a dead stick she had brought into an Indian camp we had made near the end of the west shrubbery, she flew at me in a sudden fury, smacked my face, scratched me and was suppressed with difficulty by the united manhood of us three boys. Then it was I noted first the blazing blueness of her eyes. She was light and very plucky, so that none of us cared to climb against her, and she was as difficult to hold as an eel. But all these traits and characteristics vanished when she was transformed.

For what seems now a long space of time I had not seen her or any of the family except Philip; it was certainly a year or more, probably two; Maxton was at a crammer's, and I think the others must have been in Canada with Lord Ladislav. Then came some sort of estrangement between him and his wife, and Lady Ladislav returned with Mary and Guy to Burnmore.

I was in a state of transition between the infinitely great and the infinitely little. I had just ceased to be that noble and potent being, that almost statesman-like personage, a sixth form boy at Harbury, and I was going to be an Oxford undergraduate. Philip and I came down together by the same train from Harbury; I shared the Burnmore dog-cart and luggage-cart, and he dropped me at my father's home, the rectory.

I was a long-limbed youngster of seventeen, as tall as I am now, and fair, so fair that I was still boyish-faced while most of my contemporaries and Philip

(who favored his father) were at least smudgy with mustaches. With the headmaster's valediction and the shrill cheers of a little crowd of juniors still echoing in my head, I very naturally came home in a mood of exalted gravity.

I must have gone up to Burnmore House the following afternoon. I went up alone and I was sent out through the little door at the end of the big gallery into the garden. In those days Lady Ladislaw had made an Indian pavilion under the tall trees at the east end of the house, and here I found her with her cousin Helena Christian entertaining a mixture of people, a carriageful from Hampton End, the two elder Fawneys and a man in brown who had, I think, ridden over from Chestoxter Castle.

Lady Ladislaw welcomed me with ample graciousness—as though I was a personage. "The children," she said, were still at tennis, and as she spoke I saw Guy, grown nearly beyond recognition, and then a shining being in white, very straight and graceful, with a big soft hat and overshadowed eyes that smiled, come out from the hurried endearments of the sunflakes under the shadows of the great chestnuts, into the glow of summer light before the pavilion.

"Steve arrived!" she cried, and waved a welcoming racquet.

I do not remember what I said to her, or what else she said, or what anyone said. But I believe I could paint every detail of her effect. I know that when she came out of the brightness into the shadow of the pavilion, it was like a regal condescension, and I know that she was wonderfully self-possessed and helpful with her mother's hospitalities, and that I marveled I had never before perceived the subtler sweetness in the cadence of her voice. I seem also to remember a severe internal struggle for my self-possession, and that I had to recall my exalted position in the sixth form to save myself from becoming tongue-tied and abashed and awkward and utterly shamed.

You see, she had her hair up and very prettily dressed, and those aggressive lean legs of hers had vanished, and she was sheathed in muslin that showed her

the most delicately slender and beautiful of young women. And she seemed so radiantly sure of herself!

After our first greeting I do not think I spoke to her or looked at her again throughout the meal. I took things that she handed me with an appearance of supreme indifference, was politely attentive to the elder Miss Fawney, and engaged with Lady Ladislaw and the horsey little man in brown in a lengthy discussion. Afterwards Mary confessed to me how she had been looking forward to our meeting, and how snubbed I had made her feel. . . .

Then a little later than this meeting in the pavilion, though I am not clear now whether it was the same or some subsequent afternoon, we are walking in the sunken garden, and great clouds of purple clematis and some less lavish heliotrope-colored creeper, foam up against the ruddy stone balustrading. Just in front of us a fountain gushes out of a grotto of artificial stalagmite, and bathes the pedestal of an absurd little statuette of the God of Love. We are talking almost easily. She looks sideways at my face, already with the quiet, controlled watchfulness of a woman interested in a man; she smiles and she talks of flowers and sunshine, the Canadian winter—and with an abrupt transition, of old times we've had together in the shrubbery and the wilderness of bracken out beyond.

She seems tremendously grown up and womanly to me. I am talking my best, and glad, and in a manner scared at the thrill her newly discovered beauty gives me, and keeping up my dignity and coherence with an effort. My attention is constantly being distracted to note how prettily she moves, to wonder why it is I never noticed the sweet fall, the faint, delightful whisper of a lisp in her voice before.

We agree about the flowers and the sunshine and the Canadian winter—about everything. "I think so often of those games we used to invent," she declares. "So do I," I say, "so do I." And then, with a sudden boldness: "Once I broke a stick of yours, a rotten stick

you thought a sound one. Do you remember?"

Then we laugh together and seem to approach across a painful, unnecessary distance that has separated us. It vanishes forever. "I couldn't now," she says, "smack your face like that, Stephen."

That seems to me a brilliantly daring and delightful thing for her to say, and jolly of her to use my Christian name too! "I believe I scratched," she adds.

"You never scratched," I assert with warm conviction. "Never."

"I did," she insists, and I deny: "You couldn't."

"We're growing up," she cries. "That's what has happened to us. We shall never fight again with our hands and feet; never—until death do us part."

"For better, or worse," I say, with a sense of wit and enterprise beyond all human precedent.

"For richer or poorer," she cries, taking up my challenge with a lifting laugh in her voice.

And then, to make it all nothing again, she exclaims at the white lilies that rise against masses of sweet bay along the further wall. . . .

How plainly I can recall it all! How plainly and how brightly! As we came up the broad steps at the further end towards the tennis lawn, she turned suddenly upon me and with a novel assurance of command told me to stand still. "*There,*" she said with a hand out, and seemed to survey me with her chin up and her white neck at the level of my eyes. "Yes. A whole step," she estimated, "and more, taller than I. You will look down on me, Stephen, now, for all the rest of our days."

"I shall always stand," I answered, "a step or so below you."

"No," she said, "come up to the level. A girl should be smaller than a man. You are a man, Stephen—almost. You must be near six feet. —Here's Guy with the box of balls."

She flitted about the tennis court before me, playing with Philip against Guy and myself. She punished some opening condescensions with a wicked

vigor—and presently Guy and I were straining every nerve to save the set.

IV

ALL that golden summer on the threshold of my manhood was filled by Mary. I loved her with the love of a boy and a man. Either I was with Mary or I was hoping and planning to be with Mary or I was full of some vivid new impression of her, or some enigmatical speech, some pregnant nothing, some glance or gesture engaged and perplexed my mind. In those days I slept the profound, sweet sleep of youth, but whenever that deep flow broke towards the shallows, as I sank into it at night and came out of it at morning, I passed through dreams of Mary to and from a world of waking thought of her.

It was easy for us to be very much together. We were very free that summer, and life was all leisure. Lady Ladislav was busied with her own concerns; she sometimes went away for two or three days, leaving no one but an attenuated governess with even the shadow of a claim to interfere with Mary. Moreover, she was used to seeing me with her children at Burnmore; we were still in her eyes no more than children. . . .

One afternoon of warm shadows in the wood near the red-lacquered Chinese bridge, we two were alone together and we fell silent. I was trembling and full of a wild courage. I can feel now the exquisite surmise, the doubt of that moment. Our eyes met. She looked up at me with an unwonted touch of fear in her expression and I laid my hands on her. She did not recoil; she stood mute, with her lips pressed together, looking at me steadfastly. I can feel that moment now as a tremendous hesitation, blank and yet full of light and life, like a clear sky in the moment before dawn.

She made a little move towards me. Impulsively, with no word said, we kissed.

I do not remember that we talked much of love, in the days that followed, though we were very much in love. We kissed; sometimes greatly daring we

walked hand in hand; once I took her in my arms and carried her over a swampy place beyond the Killing Wood, and held her closely to me; that was a great event between us; but we were shy of one another, shy even of very intimate words; and a thousand daring and beautiful things I dreamed of saying to her went unsaid. I do not remember any endearing names from that time. But we jested and shared our humors, shaped our developing ideas in quaint forms to amuse one another and talked—as young men talk together.

We talked of religion; I remember too that we talked endlessly about the things I was to do in the world. I do not remember that we talked about the things she was to do; by some sort of instinct and some sort of dexterity she evaded that; from the very first she had reserves from me: but my career and purpose became as it were the form in which we discussed all the purposes of life. I became Man in her imagination, the protagonist of the world. At first I displayed the modest worthy desire for respectable service that Harbury had taught me, but her clear, sceptical little voice pierced and tore all those pretences to shreds. "Do some decent public work," I said, or some such phrase.

"But is that All you want?" I hear her asking. "Is that All you want?"

I lay prone upon the turf and dug up a root of grass with my penknife. "Before I met you it was," I said.

"And now?"

"I want you."

"I'm nothing to want. I want you to want all the world.... *Why shouldn't you?*"

I think I must have talked of the greatness of serving the empire. "Yes, but splendidly," she insisted. "Not doing little things for other people—who aren't doing anything at all. I want you to conquer people and lead people.... When I see you, Stephen, sometimes—I almost wish I were a man. In order to be able to do all the things that you are going to do."

"For you," I said, "for you."

I stretched out my hand for hers, and my gesture went disregarded.

She sat rather crouched together, with her eyes gazing far away across the great spaces of the park.

"That is what women are for," she said. "To make men see how splendid life can be. To lift them up—out of a sort of timid grubbiness—" She turned upon me suddenly. "Stephen," she said, "promise me. Whatever you become, you promise and swear here and now never to be gray and grubby, never to be humpy and snuffy, never to be respectable and modest and dull and a little fat, like—like everybody. Ever."

"I swear," I said.

"By me."

"By you. No book to kiss! Please give me your hand."

V

ALL through that summer we saw much of each other. I was up at the House perhaps every other day; we young people were supposed to be all in a company together down by the tennis lawns, but indeed we dispersed and came and went by a kind of tacit understanding, Guy and Philip each with one of the Fawney girls and I with Mary.

I put all sorts of constructions upon the freedom I was given with her, but I perceive now that we still seemed scarcely more than children to Lady Ladislaw, and that the idea of our marriage was as inconceivable to her as if we had been brother and sister. Matrimonially I was as impossible as one of the stable boys. All the money I could hope to earn for years to come would not have sufficed even to buy Mary clothes.

But as yet we thought little of matters so remote, glad in our wonderful new discovery of love, and when at last I went off to Oxford, albeit the parting moved us to much tenderness and vows and embraces, I had no suspicion that never more in all our lives would Mary and I meet freely and gladly without restriction. Yet so it was. From that day came restraints and difficulties; the shadow of furtiveness fell between us; our correspondence had to be concealed.

I went to Oxford as one goes into

exile; she to London. I would post to her so that the letters reached Landor House before lunch time, when the sun of Lady Ladislaw came over the horizon, but indeed as yet no one was watching her letters. Afterwards as she moved about, she gave me other instructions, and for the most part I wrote to her in envelopes addressed for her by one of the Fawney girls, who was under her spell, and made no inquiry for what purpose these envelopes were needed.

For more than two years we did not meet at all. Then the whole sky of my life lighted up again with a strange excitement and hope. I had a note to say the Christians were to spend all the summer at Burnmore.

I remember how I handled and scrutinized that letter, seeking for some intimation that our former intimacy was still alive. We were to meet. How should we meet? How would she look at me? What would she think of me?

Of course it was all different. Our first encounter in this new phase had a quality of extreme disillusionment. The warm, living creature, who would whisper, who would kiss with wonderful lips, who would say strange, daring things, who had soft hair one might touch with a thrilling and worshipful hand, who changed one at a word or a look into a God of pride, became as if she had been no more than a dream. A self-possessed young aristocrat in white and brown glanced at me from amidst a group of brilliant people on the terrace, nodded as it seemed quite carelessly in acknowledgment of my salutation, and resumed her confident conversation with a tall, stooping man, no less a person than Evesham, the Prime Minister. He was lunching at Burnmore on his way across country to the Rileys. I heard that dear laugh of hers, as ready and easy as when she laughed with me. I had not heard it for nearly three years—nor any sound that had its sweetness. "But, Mr. Evesham," she was saying, "nowadays we don't believe that sort of thing—"

"There are a lot of things still for you to believe," said Mr. Evesham, beaming. "A lot of things! One's capac-

ity increases. It grows with exercise. Justin will bear me out."

Beyond her stood an undersized, brown-clad, middle-aged man with a big head, a dark face and expressive brown eyes fixed now in unrestrained admiration on Mary's laughing face. This, then, was Justin, the incredibly rich and powerful, whose comprehensive operations could make and break a thousand fortunes in a day. He answered Evesham carelessly, with his gaze still on Mary, and in a voice too low for my ears.

Presently, as Philip and I made unreal conversation together, I saw Mary disengage herself and come towards us. It was as if a princess came towards a beggar. Absurd are the changes of phase between women and men. A year or so ago, and all of us had been but "the children" together; now here were Philip and I mere youths still, nobodies, echoes and aspirations, crude promises at the best, and here was Mary in full flower, as glorious and central as the Hampton Court azaleas in spring.

"And this is Stephen," she said, aglow with happy confidence.

I made no memorable reply, and there was a little pause thick with mute questionings.

"After lunch," she said, with her eyes on mine, "I am going to measure against you on the steps. I'd hoped—when you weren't looking—I might creep up—"

"I've taken no advantage," I said.

"You've kept your lead."

Justin had followed her towards us, and now held out a hand to Philip. "Well, Philip, my boy," he said, and defined our places. Philip made some introductory gesture with a word or so towards me. Justin glanced at me as one might glance at some one's new dog, gave an expressionless nod to my stiff movement of recognition, and addressed himself at once to Mary.

"Lady Mary," he said, "I've wanted to tell you—"

I caught her quick eye for a moment and knew she had more to say to me, but neither she nor I had the skill and alacrity to get that said.

"I wanted to tell you," said Justin, "I've found a little Japanese who's done





I saw Lady Mary color quickly before I looked away. "Charming, isn't she?" said Lady Viping, and I discovered those infernal glasses were for a moment honoring me.



exactly what you wanted with that group of dwarf maples."

She clearly didn't understand.

"But what did I want, Mr. Justin?" she asked.

"Don't say that you forget!" cried Justin. "Oh, don't tell me you forget! You wanted a little exact copy of a Japanese house—I've had it done. Beneath the trees—"

"And so you're back in Burnmore, Mr. Stratton," said Lady Ladislav, intervening between me and their duologue. And I never knew how pleased Mary was with this faithful realization of her passing and forgotten fancy. My hostess greeted me warmly and pressed my hand, smiled mechanically and looked over my shoulder all the while to Mr. Evesham and her company generally, and then came the deep uproar of a gong from the house and we were all moving in groups and couples luncheon-ward.

Justin walked with Lady Mary, and she was, I saw, an inch taller than his squat solidity. A tall lady in rose-pink had taken possession of Guy; Evesham and Lady Ladislav made the two centers of a straggling group who were bandying recondite political allusions. Then came one or two couples and trios with nothing very much to say and active ears. Philip and I brought up the rear silently and in all humility. Even young Guy had gone over our heads. I was too full of a stupendous realization for any words. Of course, during those years, Mary had been doing—no end of things! And while I had been just drudging with lectures and books and theorizing about the Empire and what I could do with it, and taking exercise, she had learned, it seemed—the World.

VI

LUNCH was in the great dining-room. There was a big table and two smaller ones; we sat down anyhow, but the first comers had grouped themselves about Lady Ladislav and Evesham and Justin and Mary in a central orb, and I had to drift perforce to one of the satellites. I procured a seat whence I could get a glimpse ever and again over Justin's

assiduous shoulders of a delicate profile, and I found myself immediately engaged in answering the innumerable impossible questions of Lady Viping, the widow of terrible old Sir Joshua, that devastating divorce court judge, who didn't believe in divorces. His domestic confidences had, I think, corrupted her mind altogether. She cared for nothing but evidence.

"And so that's the great Mr. Justin," rustled Lady Viping, and stared across me.

"They say he's a woman-hater," said Lady Viping. "It hardly looks like it now, does it?"

"Who?" I asked. "What?—oh!—Justin."

"The great financial cannibal. Suppose she turned him into a philanthropist! Stranger things have happened. Look!—now. The man's face is positively tender."

I hated looking, and I could not help but look. Justin was saying something to Mary in an undertone, something that made her glance up swiftly and at me before she answered, and there I was with my head side by side with those quivering dyed curls, that flighty black bonnet, that remorseless, observant lorgnette. I could have sworn aloud at the hopeless indignity of my pose.

I saw Mary color quickly before I looked away.

"Charming, isn't she?" said Lady Viping, and I discovered those infernal glasses were for a moment honoring me. They shut with a click. "Ham," said Lady Viping. "I told him no ham—and now I remember—I like ham. Or rather I like spinach. I forgot the spinach. One has the ham for the spinach—don't you think? Yes—tell him. She's a perfect Dresden ornament, Mr. Stratton. She's adorable." And then the lorgnette again, and a search for fresh topics.

All this chatter is mixed up in my mind with an unusual sense of hovering, attentive men-servants, who seemed all of them to my heated imagination to be watching me lest I looked too much at the Lady Mary Christian. Of course, they were merely watching our plates

and glasses, but my nerves and temper were now in such a state that if a man went to the buffet to get Sir Godfrey the pickled walnuts, I fancied he went to report the progress of my infatuation.

I felt indignant with Mary. I felt she disowned me and deserted me and repudiated me, that she ought in some manner to have recognized me. I gave her no credit for her speech to me before the lunch, or her promise to measure against me again. I blinded myself to all her frank friendliness. I felt she ought not to notice Justin, ought not to answer him. . . . Clearly she liked those men to flatter her, she liked it.

I remember too, so that I must have noted it and felt it then as a thing perceived for the first time, the large dignity of the room, the tall windows and splendid rich curtains, the darkened Hoppners upon the walls. I noted too the quality and abundance of the table things; there were grapes and peaches, strawberries, cherries and green almonds piled lavishly above the waiting dessert plates with the golden knives and forks, upon a table in the sunshine of the great bay. The very sunshine filtered through the tall narrow panes from the great chestnut trees without, seemed of a different quality from the common light of day.

I felt like a poor relation. I sympathized with Anarchists. We had come out of the Park now, finally, both Mary and I—into this. . . .

"Mr. Stratton, I am sure, agrees with me."

For a time I had been marooned, conversationally, and Lady Viping had engaged Sir Godfrey. Evidently he was refractory and she was back at me.

"Look at it now in profile," she said, and directed me once more to that unendurable grouping. Justin again!

"It's a heavy face," I said.

"It's a powerful face. I wouldn't care anyhow to be up against it—as people say." And the lorgnette shut with a click. "What is this? Peaches!—Yes, and give me some cream."

I hovered long for that measuring I had been promised on the steps, but

either Mary had forgotten or she deemed it wiser to forget.

Finally I took my leave of Lady Ladislav; I felt confused and shattered to incoherence by the new quality of Mary's atmosphere. I turned my steps towards the wilder, lonelier part of the park beyond the Killing Wood, and lay down in a wide space of grass between two divergent thickets of bracken.

There it was in the park that for the first time I pitted myself against life upon a definite issue, and prepared my first experience of defeat. "I *will* have her," I said, hammering at the turf with my fist. "I *will*. I do not care if I give all my life. . . ."

Then I lay still and bit the sweetness out of joints of grass, and presently thought and planned.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

The Courtship of the Lady Mary Christian

I

FOR three or four days I could get no word with Mary. I could not now come and go as I had been able to do in the days when we were still "the children." I could not work; I could not rest; I prowled as near as I could to Burnmore House, hoping for some glimpse of her, waiting for the moment when I could decently present myself again at the house.

When at last I called, Justin had gone and things had some flavor of the ancient time. Lady Ladislav received me with an airy intimacy, all the careful responsibility of her luncheon party manner thrown aside. "You'll find them all at tennis," said Lady Ladislav, and waved me on to the gardens. There I found all four of them and had to wait until their set was finished.

"Mary," I said at the first chance, "are we never to talk again?"

"It's all different," she said.

"I am dying to talk to you—as we used to talk."

"And I—Stevenage. But— You see?"

"Next time I come," I said, "I shall bring you a letter. There is so much—"

"No," she said. "Can't you get up in the morning? Very early—five or six. No one is up until ever so late."

"I'd stay up all night."

"Serve!" said Maxton, who was playing the two of us and had stopped, I think, to tighten a shoe.

Things conspired against any more intimacy for a time. But we got our moment on the way to tea. She glanced back at Philip, who was loosening the net, and then forward to estimate the distance of Maxton and Guy. "They're all three going," she said, "after Tuesday. Then—before six."

"Wednesday?"

"Yes. You know the old Ice House?"

"Towards the gardens?"

"Yes. On the further side. Don't come by the road; come across by the end of the mere. Lie in the bracken until you see me coming."

II

TO this day a dewy morning in late

August brings back the thought of Mary and those stolen meetings. I have the minutest recollection of the misty bloom upon the turf, and the ragged, filmy carpet of gossamer on either hand, of the warm wetness of every little blade and blossom and of the little scraps and seeds of grass upon my soaking and discolored boots. Our footsteps were dark green upon the dewy-gray grass. And I feel the same hungry freshness again at the thought of those stolen meetings. Presently came the sunrise, blinding, warming, dew-dispelling arrows of gold smiting through the tree stems, a flood of light foaming over the bracken and gilding the under sides of the branches. Everything is different and distinctive in those opening hours; everything has a different value from what it has by day. All the little things upon the ground, fallen branches, tussocks, wood-piles, have a peculiar intensity and importance, seem magnified, because of the length of their shadows in the slanting rays, and all the great trees seem lifted above the light and merged with the sky. And at last, a cool gray outline against the blaze; and with a glancing

iridescent halo about her, comes Mary, adventurous, friendly, wonderful.

"Oh, Stevenage!" she cries, "to see you again!"

We each hold out both our hands and clasp and hesitate and rather shyly kiss.

"Come!" she says, "we can talk for an hour. It's still not six. And there is a fallen branch where we can sit and put our feet out of the wet. Oh! it's so good to be out of things again—clean out of things—with you."

"You're glad to be with me?" I ask, jealous of the very sunrise.

"I am always glad," she says, "to be with you. Why don't we always get up at dawn, Stevenage, every day of our lives?"

We go rustling through the grass to the prostrate timber she has chosen. (I can remember even the thin bracelet on the wrist of the hand that lifted her skirt.) I help her to clamber into a comfortable fork from which her feet can swing.

Such fragments as this are as bright, as undimmed, as if we had met this morning. But then comes our conversation, and that I find vague and irregularly obliterated. But I think I must have urged her to say she loved me, and beat about the bush of that declaration, too fearful to put my heart's wish to the issue, that she would promise to wait three years for me—until I could prove it was not madness for her to marry me. "I have been thinking of it all night and every night since I have been here," I said. "Somehow I will do something. In some way—I will get hold of things. Believe me!—with all my strength."

"Stephen dear," she said, "dear, dear boy! I have never wanted to kiss you so much in all my life. Dear, come close to me."

She bent her fresh young face down to mine; her fingers were in my hair.

"My Knight," she whispered close to me. "My beautiful young Knight."

I whispered back and touched her dew fresh lips....

"And tell me what would you do to conquer the world for me?" she asked.

I cannot remember now a word of all the vague threatenings against the sun-

dering universe with which I replied.

But I do know that even on this first morning she left me with a sense of beautiful unreality, of having dipped for some precious moments into heroic gossamer. All my world subjugation seemed already as evanescent as the morning haze and the vanishing dews as I stood, a little hidden in the shadows of the Killing Wood and ready to plunge back at the first hint of an observer, and watched her slender whiteness flit circumspectly towards the house.

III

THERE stands out very clearly a conversation in a different mood at one of our next meetings in the early morning. We were at cross purpose, for now it was becoming clear to me that Mary did not mean to marry me, that she dreaded making any promise to me for the future, that all the heroic common cause I wanted with her was quite alien to her dreams.

"But Mary," I said, looking at her colorless, delicate face, "don't you love me? Don't you want me?"

"You know I love you, Stevenage," she said. "You know."

"But if two people love one another, they want to be always together; they want to belong to each other."

She looked at me with her face very intent upon her meaning. "Stevenage," she said after one of those steadfast pauses of hers, "I want to belong to myself."

"Naturally," I said with air of disposing of an argument, and then paused.

"Why should one have to tie oneself always to one other human being?" she asked. "Why must it be like that?"

"One loves," I said. The subtle scepticisms of her mind went altogether beyond my habits of thinking; it had never occurred to me that there was any other way of living except in these voluntary and involuntary mutual servitudes in which men and women live and die. "If you love me," I urged, "if you love me—I want nothing better in all my life but to love and serve and

keep you and make you happy."

She surveyed me and weighed my words against her own.

"I love meeting you," she said. "I love your going because it means that afterwards you will come again. I love this—this slipping out to you. But up there, there is a room in the house that is *my* place—me—my own. Nobody follows me there. I want to go on living, Stevenage, just as I am living now. I don't want to become some one's certain possession, to be just usual and familiar to anyone. No, not even to you."

"But if you love—" I cried.

"To you least of all. Don't you see? —I want to be wonderful to you, Stevenage, more than to anyone. I want—I want always to make your heart beat faster. I want always to be coming to you with my own heart beating faster. Always and always I want it to be like that. Just as it has been on these mornings. It has been beautiful—altogether beautiful."

"Yes," I said, rather helplessly, and struggled with great issues I had never faced before.

"It isn't," I said, "how people live."

"It is how I want to live," said Mary.

"It isn't the way life goes."

"I want it to be. Why shouldn't it be? Why at any rate shouldn't it be for me?"

IV

I made some desperate schemes to grow suddenly rich and powerful. I am far enough off now from that angry and passionate youngster to smile at the thought that my subjugation of things in general and high finance in particular took at last the form of proposing to go into the office of Bean, Medhurst, Stockton, and Schnadhorst upon half commission terms. I was in London awaiting my father's reply to this startling suggestion when I got a telegram from Mary:

We are going to Scotland unexpectedly. Come down and see me.

I went home instantly, and told my father I had come to talk things over with him. A note from Mary lay upon



"Oh! love me,
my Stephen,
love me, dear.
Love me as if
we were
never to love
again. Am I
beautiful, my
dear? Am I
beautiful in the
moonlight?
Tell me! ...

Perhaps this
is the night of
our lives, dear!
Perhaps
never again
will you and
I be happy!...
But the won-
der, dear, the
beauty! Isn't
it still? It's as
if nothing
really stood
solid and dry.
As if every-
thing float-
ed. ..."





the hall-table as I came in. It was in pencil, scribbled hastily. I was to wait after eleven that night near the great rosebushes behind the pavilion. Long before eleven I was there, on a seat in a thick shadow looking across great lakes of moonlight towards the phantom statuary of the Italianate garden and the dark laurels that partly masked the house. I waited nearly an hour, an hour of stillness and small creepings and cheepings and goings to and fro among the branches.

And then, wrapped about in a dark velvet cloak, still in her white dinner dress, with shining, gleaming, glancing stones about her dear throat, warm and wonderful and glowing and daring, Mary came flitting out of the shadows to me.

"My dear," she whispered, panting and withdrawing a little from our first passionate embrace. "Oh my dear!... How did I come? Twice before, when I was a girl, I got out this way. By the corner of the conservatory and down the laundry wall. You can't see from here, but it's easy—easy. There's a tree that helps. And now I have come that way to you. *You*...."

"Oh! love me, my Stephen, love me, dear. Love me as if we were never to love again. Am I beautiful, my dear? Am I beautiful in the moonlight? Tell me!...."

"Perhaps this is the night of our lives, dear! Perhaps never again will you and I be happy!...."

"But the wonder, dear, the beauty! Isn't it still? It's as if nothing really stood solid and dry. As if everything floated...."

"Everyone in all the world has gone to sleep to-night and left the world to us. Come! Come this way and peep at the house, there. Stoop—under the branches. See, not a light is left! And all its blinds are drawn and its eyes shut. One window is open, *my* little win-

dow, Stephen, but that is in the shadow where that creeper makes everything black.

"Along here a little further is night-stock. Now—now! Sniff, Stephen! Sniff! The scent of it! It lies—like a bank of scented air.... And Stephen, there! Look!.... A star—a star without a sound, falling out of the blue! It's gone!"

There was her dear face close to mine, soft under the soft moonlight, and the breath of her sweet speech mingled with the scent of the night-stock....

That was indeed the most beautiful night of my life, a night of moonlight and cool fragrance and adventurous excitement. We were transported out of this old world of dusty limitations; it was as if for those hours the curse of man was lifted from our lives. No one discovered us, no evil thing came near us. For a long time we lay close in one another's arms upon a bank of thyme. Our heads were close together; her eyelashes swept my cheeks; we spoke rarely and in soft whispers, and our hearts were beating, beating. We were as solemn as great mountains and as innocent as sleeping children. Our kisses were kisses of moonlight. And it seemed to me that nothing that had ever happened or could happen afterwards mattered against that happiness....

It was nearly three when at last I came back into my father's garden. No one had missed me from my room and the house was all asleep, but I could not get in because I had closed a latch behind me, and so I stayed in the little arbor until day, watching the day break upon long beaches of pale cloud over the hills towards Alfridsham. I slept at last with my head upon my arms upon the stone table, until the noise of shooting bolts and doors being unlocked roused me to watch my chance and slip back again into the house, and up the darkened staircase to my bedroom.

The next installment of "*The Passionate Friends*" will be in the September Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands August 23.

Where the "i" Goes in "Receive"

By Ida M. Evans

Author of "Pink Fondant and Gray Serge," etc.

ILLUSTRATED
—BY—
J. A. WILSON



AND—for what purpose do you want this money?"

From behind a sleek mahogany railing, a sleek-groomed, green-eyed, high-browed, blondish young man reproachfully purred the question. One sallow hand held a small bundle of dirty green bills. The other held a large bundle of clean black-typed sheets of paper, foolscap size, each neatly perforated into oblong slips some three inches wide. The upper left-hand corner of each oblong began, in small type, "I promise to pay—" Its lower right corner bore, in fresh purple ink, "Frances Elizabeth Brown."

The reproachful intonation intimated

that the question should have been forestalled by voluntary information.

On the other side of the sleek railing, which separated the sacred inner precincts of the Puritan Loan Company from the linoleumed rectangle that a humble public might occupy, stood Miss Brown. At the purred question she paused in the delicate operation of fastening a pair of black glacé gloves whose eyelets had long since outgrown the buttons which it was their duty to clasp. Her eyes—which were very blue, and very pretty—flashed polite astonishment.

The blondish young man repeated his query, with the weary impatience of one

who long ago grew tired of the stupid inhabitants of a stupid world.

"Well," said Miss Brown reflectively, "I could say that a brutal landlord was about to turn me out of my humble but cherished stove-heated flat. Or I could say that the interest of the mortgage on the dear old homestead was overdue. Or I could say—just what I'm going to say: That I want it to s-p-e-n-d."

An expression of haughty wrath flitted from the corners of the blondish young man's flat-lipped mouth to his too-high forehead. His emerald-hued eyes presented a surface so glassy that no expression ventured near them.

"The Puritan Loan Company," he announced severely, "does not care to advance loans to people who are unwilling, as an evidence of good faith, to tell why they need the money!"

Frances Brown's eyes shot fire.

"Now see here, young man! I've written my name twelve times on as many promissory notes, not counting the assignment of my body, soul and salary in case the street-car's delayed by a blockade and I'm ten seconds late on monthly payment day; I've confided that I'm Scotch-American with a dash of German and a flavor of Irish; twenty-two years old; a stenographer who can't get past twelve per on account of a chronic inability to remember whether *i* or *e* comes first in *Receive*; half a high school education and a three months' whack at business college; that I'm Baptist by raising and Unitarian by instinct; that I can't bear macaroni with cheese and dote on paprika; and that glycerine doesn't agree with my skin. I should think,"—aggrievedly, "that the Puritan Loan Company might leave me one item of mental privacy."

"I repeat, Miss,"—coldly, "that I must insist—"

"Go as far as you like on your insistent way," said Miss Brown airily. She beamed with satisfaction as one wabbly eyelet at last coyly embraced a tarnished button. Then she held out a hand for the money.

But the blondish young man held it out of her reach. "No, you don't," he said rudely. "I want to know whatcha want it for."

"In that case,"—coolly, "I'll just tear up those specimens of my handwriting." And she reached for the perforated sheets of black type.

The blondish young man hastily grabbed the perforated sheets.

"Oh, well," he snarled, "seein' you're ashamed to tell what you want it for"—the girl's face reddened—"I wont insist—this time."

Three times he slowly flipped the corners of the bills with a saliva-moistened forefinger.

"Hurry," ordered Miss Brown impatiently. "It's twelve-thirty, and my employer has a chronic yearning to see me in close communion with my machine around one P. M."

He gave her the money. And then it appeared that the emerald-hued eyes were not wholly non-transmitters of expression. Their glassy green depths lightened: as the slimy green surface of a stagnant pool sometimes lightens, when the wind moves the overhanging dank vegetation and the shadows waver.

"I shouldn't think," he leered, "that a girl as pretty as you would have to—borrow money."

Frances Brown tucked the money in her shabby imitation-leather purse. "I shouldn't think," she returned calmly, "that a fellow as unprepossessing as you would be trusted by the Puritan Loan Company to handle its money."

Before the blondish young man could more than glare, she had hurried through the anteroom and caught a descending elevator. When she stepped out into the corridor of the first floor, a boy—six feet tall, but nevertheless a boy—darted across to meet her.

"Did you get it, Frances?" he demanded thickly.

"Yes,"—briefly.

"Gee! I'm glad. I was scared stiff for fear you couldn't. Give it here. I'll take it down to the old robber."

Frances looked steadily at her brother, younger than she was by three years. "I'll go with you,"—evenly.

"Oh, say!" he protested angrily. "I don't like to have you come along. It would look queer—a fellow's sister chasing along with him to pay a debt. Some of the boys might be in the

poolroom next door—and they'd laugh."

"They may snicker till their faces are creased three inches deep," she returned calmly. "You needn't argue, Vernon; I'm going."

Sullenly he fell into step with her as they hurried down a street that was a seething jam of luncheon-seekers. In silence they dodged street-cars, taxicabs, trucks, motor-buses; with city dexterity threaded a devious way among the swift mob; they paused mechanically when a crossing policeman whistled a pause, and shot on when he whistled on.

There was a striking likeness between them—and a striking unlikeness. Both had big violet-blue eyes, fringed by long black lashes. Both had clear white skin and thick, wavy, golden-brown hair. But the boy's eyes looked out from purplish-green shadows and a network of fine, tired lines, shadows and lines that no nineteen-year-old boy should have. His chin was flabbily round. Also he set his feet shufflingly on the pavement, and his immature shoulders sagged forward.

The girl's chin was a strong white line, and the shoulders under the black cheviot coat were well-poised. Her narrow soles hit the asphalt with the spring of energy.

On State Street they went south—past Van Buren. There she sent her glance straight ahead; careful to look neither to the right nor the left, and so avoided sight of some of the raucous barkers, the bulbous-faced loiterers of the pavement, and the slinking loungers in the dirty hallways.

"Did they soak you much interest?" the boy finally asked with a slight show of abasement.

"Rather. They gave me fifty dollars. I have to pay back seventy-five—within five months."

"Couldn't you have borrowed it from one of the men you work for, and avoided so much interest? Old Karnell—or that other chap, Hallerton?"

Frances laughed, not with ill-humor. "No, Vernon dear, I couldn't. That is, I might, but I wouldn't. Why, I'd as soon stop a perfectly strange woman on State Street and ask her to buy me a maple nut sundae as to intimate to my respected employer that I was hard up—"

"Oh, not that old grouch of a Karnell," Vernon explained with petulance. "But—Hallerton—I talked to him once when I was waiting for you, and he seemed a decent fellow—"

"I'd rather pay loan-shark interest," Frances said coldly, and a peculiar light darkened her eyes.

They had reached a café, the kind that is dirty, reeky, dingy, nauseating and repulsive in the hard bright light of day, and a white and gold radiance of electricity, popping bottles and foamy steins at night.

Vernon's shuffling feet halted.

"This the place?" Frances asked briskly.

"Y-e-es. Say, Frances, it isn't a fit place for you—"

Without listening, she walked in, and he followed, his young lips pouted, his eyes downcast, past two rows of cheap-varnished round oak tables, still splattered with last night's stale beer and wine. The air was heavy with the peculiar vapid odor of half-burned tobacco and dribblings of many kinds of liquor.

A colored porter, swabbing the hardwood floor with soapsuds, stared as he lifted the pail aside to let them pass. The whites of his eyes rolled in wonder. It was not the proper time of day for weak-chinned boys and pretty young girls to drop in.

At one of the last tables sat a middle-aged man, of the purple, beefy build. A heavy red neck rolled out over a collar under which a flaming purple cravat held a flaming diamond, double-flanked by emeralds. Between his thick purple lips was a dainty cork-tipped cigarette. At their approach, he removed it with ostentatious courtesy, and shoved the watch he had been consulting into the pocket of a tan-checked waistcoat.

In the adjoining room a white-aproned bartender leaned idle elbows on the polished mahogany bar, and listened interestedly to the ensuing conversation.

"Yo're late," complained the beefy proprietor. "You telephoned you'd be here at twelve-thirty." But, as he surveyed Frances, the peeved expression on his heavy face lightened to admiration.

Frances disdained to answer. She

counted out the fifty dollars, then added two silver halves from a coin purse. "That pays up in full," she stated. "Give me a receipt."

"Um-huh," he admitted, and consulted a small account book. "Mike,"—to the bartender, "give the lady a receipt in full."

"And now,"—jovially, "the kid is square with the world—aint you, Vernon?"

"Ye-es," said Vernon, twisting awkwardly on one foot.

"You mustn't be riled, Miss, because I threatened to have him arrested for getting goods under false pretense. Course we fellows get sore when we think we've been buncoed. But Vernon knows I'm too easy to ever carry such a threat out. Don't you, Vernon?"

The beefy man was quite plaintive in his effort to placate his patron's pretty sister. "You know I'm a good-natured chap, Vernie."

"Guess so," muttered Vernon.

"And just to show there's no hard feelings, Miss, what'll you have?"—with a lordly wave toward the bar.

Frances folded the receipt the bartender had brought, turned and walked out. Vernon scowled haughtily at his erstwhile creditor and followed her. Going back uptown, he groveled in the dust,

and promised, swore, vowed, that never again—oh, never, *never*—would he worry her. As soon as he got a position—and a fellow in a wholesale house had told him of a vacancy in the shipping department—he would pay every cent back to her. Maybe, sometime, he would make enough so she wouldn't have to work—

Frances sighed when Vernon left her, and she watched the immature shoulders swing into the hurrying throng. She sighed again, drearily, as she turned into the office building and entered the ele-



"And just to show there's no hard feelings, Miss, what'll you have?"

vator for the tenth floor, where James Karnall, architect, had his suite.

Sighs were her only weapon, her only comfort, with Vernon.

Vernon was—well, just Vernon. Weak, whimperish, easily led, eager to promise, mad after the gay café life, unable to hold a position. Yet Frances found all her wrath melting whenever she remembered Vernon's father. For he too had been weak, easily led. And his chin had been round and softly shaped.

She went back over their life: the first years; her mother's tired, patient face, and her incessant spoiling of the baby boy; the gradual tightening of poverty's ropes. Then her father had died, yelling for her mother to shoo away "that slimy green snake—it's licking its red tongue over my leg—Elizabeth, for God's sake, drive it away!"

It had been only four years since her mother died, tired of life, but horribly afraid to go and leave Vernon behind. "You know, Frances," she sighed, even while the shadow of the Black Guest fell over the doorway, "he's easily led. You'll make allowances, Frances—you'll always look out for him, and take care of him—"

"Yes," firmly answered Frances, and never recked that there was no one to take care of her.

It was twenty-five minutes after one when she demurely scooted into the outer office of James Karnell, took off her hat and coat, and hastily uncovered the typewriter.

James Karnell was waiting—and glowering. He was so largely built on unwieldy lines that it was a great pity fate hadn't made him a trust magnate; he would have been white chicken meat to cartoonists. The leather arms of his swivel chair were quite lost under his huge hips. Over his collar, multitudinous thick-pored yellow chins hung like flaps of curdled cream.

When circumstances compelled James Karnell to wait, those yellow flapping chins turned five shades of orange and indigo.

"You're late, Miss Brown," he accused in a voice as repelling and hard as his watery brown eyes.

"I'm sorry," Miss Brown apologized

very meekly, and precipitately got out pad and pencil for dictation. Ask *that* for a loan! She grimaced inwardly at the thought. But her outward expression was properly deferential.

Owing to her incertitude in the priority of certain letters in *Receive* and its ilk, and a habitual doubt as to the number of *l's* in such wrigglers as *parallel*, Miss Brown curbed her natural buoyancy of speech, and always talked meekly to employers, especially those of James Karnell's disposition. She had learned sometime before that a pleasant humility is necessary if one would cover a multitude of spelling sins.

"Don't let it happen again," he snapped, and immediately began to mumble, splutter, harangue and stutter the replies to some eight or ten letters, which Miss Brown should have typed for him to sign when he returned at three o'clock. Then he went over to his club to swallow a charcoal lozenge, a mutton chop and a pepsin tablet.

Frances glanced absently at a big sign over her desk, which announced in stern black type that any employee caught patronizing loan agencies would be discharged immediately, tucked up a stray wisp of golden-brown hair that had fallen over one ear, and set the keys clicking furiously.

Before she had begun to decipher the hastily jotted pots and hooks, Graham Hallerton, a lawyer whose office adjoined Karnell's, came in with two letters that he desired typed some time before morning. "No rush," he told her absently, and strolled out. Whereupon she immediately shoved Karnell's correspondence to one side, got out a pocket dictionary, and very carefully attended to Hallerton's.

Hallerton was a tall, thin man, around thirty-five, one guessed from the grayish brown hair. When Karnell fished Frances from the desolation of an employment office six months before, and told her that since neither he nor his friend next door had a heavy correspondence, they employed but one girl, she had pitied the man who had to wear that shabby gray suit. Afterward she learned that Hallerton wore it because it was too much bother to buy a new one. In time she

came to the conclusion that a man who wore anything better than a shabby, unpressed gray suit, was a fop, a popinjay, an effeminate thing, at which she turned up a scornful nose.

Hallerton had an absent way of looking at people and at typed letters as if he did not really see them. James Karnell had ferret eyes that never missed a lacking comma or an erasure smudge. Yet Frances did not lose a vestige of her self-possession when he scowled over her work. While, under Hallerton's absent, unseeing gray eyes, she flushed rose-pink and wondered in acute misery if that last comma should have been a dash.

II

There are many things that tear up speed in this world: cannon balls, express trains, wireless messages, eighty-horse power motors, aeroplanes and such. But there is nothing that can gallop madly into non-existence like thirty days with an interest-bearing note at each end.

And when that note is made payable to a loan-shark! You go to sleep Monday evening with the comfortable knowledge that note-day is a long way off: twenty or twenty-two days. Plenty of time to save. No need to stint on luncheons that week. Three salary days are bound to appear before that note can hold out greedy talons.

And all at once, in two or three days, it seems, you wake up in a grim gray dawn with an awful prescience of woe gripping your heartstrings and sending white jabs of heat down an icy spine. You concentrate your panicky thoughts, and become cognizant of a note that is due that very day. And you are eighty cents short, even cutting out luncheon and borrowing back the quarter you lent a fellow last week.

Frances soberly watched one payment day skim into view, and depart after scraping her purse. Vernon had been working, but he owed a few other debts, small sums, to the boys. His pride insisted that he pay them.

The second day came. She met it with difficulty. Vernon had spent an afternoon in a poolroom, and lost his job.

Economy had been needed to stretch the twelve dollars over rent, food, carfare, and the note: economy that cut to the quick. She would have upbraided Vernon, but he was pitifully ashamed, and hung his head at her first word. So her anger wilted. After all, she decided hopelessly, one couldn't whittle a marble bust from a cauliflower.

Vernon spent his enforced leisure scrubbing and polishing the three rear rooms that they pretended were home. He was as handy as a girl around the house, and wouldn't let Frances even wash the dishes at night. And he knew a fellow in a drug-store who knew of a vacancy—Oh, it was quite impossible for Frances to stay angry at him.

When Frances paid the first note, the blondish young man, remembering her sharp tongue, was coldly peevish. By the second day, he again assayed to be sociable.

"You live on Maple Avenue—don't you?"

"It's on the notes in plain writing," she returned. "And I haven't flitted."

"I'm up that way lots of times," he told her affably. "I'll drop in some evening."

"Better wait till you're asked," she retorted. "I'll take that note along—after you've canceled it."

Huffily he drew it from the drawer into which he had dropped it. "Afraid I'll collect it twice?" he demanded indignantly.

"I wouldn't put it past you—if you thought you could."

Affability peeled from the blondish young man and left him a sallow statue of venom. "Just you be on the square and make your payments promptly," he said severely, "and you'll have no trouble with us."

The next month payment was easier. Vernon had been working for two weeks—selling cigars to the city trade on commission.

But when the fourth note fell due, Vernon had been home sick for ten days. At first it was a cold; later it developed into the grippe, or worse. The doctor hoped it wouldn't be pneumonia—and blandly informed Frances that he was usually paid at each call.

So she was several dollars short of the amount that the blondish young man had every right to expect. "I'll bring it up at the end of the week," she told him.

"Will you?"—with offensive sarcasm. "I guess you will—and I also guess that you'll sign another note right now. The interest doubles, y'know, when you're behind on a payment."

"I don't care to sign another note," she protested.

"All right. It's nothing to me. Only—I'll have to garnishee your salary."

Frances considered. If he garnisheed her salary, she would be much inconvenienced. The landlady was a decent sort—she would wait. But the milkman and the butcher liked cash. So did the doctor—and the street-car conductors. It was a twenty-to-one shot that James Karnell would discharge her. She might not get another position for several weeks. And then came a jarring, sickening thought. The blondish young man could go on indefinitely garnisheeing her salary wherever she worked. The assignment she had made put her absolutely at his mercy.

So she signed the note—as the blondish young man knew all the time she would. Some hundreds of times—or was it thousands?—he had witnessed that mental conflict wherein fear and reason triumphed over reason and fear.

At the end of the week—Karnell paid on Thursdays—she made up the fourth note. Vernon was able to go to work again, although the purple-green shadows under his eyes were heavier. And she managed to pay the fifth—which would have been the last if she hadn't signed that extra one.

A week later, Vernon came home with another cold. He had been out all one drizzly afternoon. A whisky-guzzling father, a food-stinted childhood, glittering cafés and late hours do not combine to build up tough lungs. This time the cold merely whooped an introduction to pneumonia. The woman who had the two front rooms was a crippled seamstress. Being very poor herself, she understood perfectly that Frances couldn't quit work, even for half a day. So she brought her sewing in by the boy's bed, and took care of him until Frances got home at five-thirty.

When the extra note-day came, the girl ignored it. The condition of her pocket-book made any other course impossible. Whereupon the blondish young man dropped into the office the next afternoon to see her.

He brought some more notes for her to sign. Which, of course, added more note-days to her collection. After a short parley—a parley in which "garnishee" and "assignment" and "how can you help yourself?" played a loud part—she signed them.

Karnell and Hallerton came in as he was leaving.

"Is that the chap from Crocker and Lyons?" Karnell demanded. "Why doesn't he wait—"

"He—he came to see me," Frances faltered, crimson-faced under the suspicion that gleamed in Karnell's watery eyes. Not that it meant anything. Long years of distrust of the world in general had planted that gleam. He was not at all interested in Miss Brown's affairs or friends, and in a second had forgotten the blondish young man.

After that, since she wearily refused to go to him, the blondish young man came up frequently to see her. Usually he extracted a dollar or two. After a while she got dizzy trying to figure just how she stood with the loan company, and gave up. It was easier to sign a note whenever he held one out.

It happened that Karnell did not see him again. But Hallerton did—several times. And the absent look in his eyes was whipped into a keen glance by the sight. Frances flushed under it—and inevitably had to rewrite a letter.

One week she had not a cent to give the blondish young man. It was Friday. "Why, you got paid yesterday!" he cried angrily.

She mechanically signed the note he pushed out. "Next week," he began threateningly—then hurried out.

She laid her head down on the typewriter—not to cry, because Karnell would be back presently, but to calculate with knife-slashing nicety how lonesome three rooms would be if Vernon—got worse. The fever was stripping him to a skeleton, and the doctor told her he had done all he could.

Despite the imminence of Karnell's return, she would have cried if she hadn't heard Hallerton's step in the anteroom. She straightened hurriedly, and typed the letter he dictated. He looked at the sheet which she handed him—and gave it back.

"I am corresponding with the Puritan Insurance Company," he told her sharply. "Not the Puritan Loan Company. Never heard of 'em."

She wrote it again, as well as she could with one ear quivering for the jingle of the telephone. The crippled seamstress had promised to let her know how Vernon's temperature was behaving; the doctor said that a change ought to come about three o'clock. It jangled while she was finishing the letter. Hallerton answered, and then called her. She hesitated a moment—afraid to go. Hallerton had lingered and was watching her. But the color flashed into her drawn face when she listened; there had been a change, and Vernon was slightly improved.

By then, there were purple-green shadows about her eyes, heavy shadows that crept darkly down to her white cheeks.

She was surprised when the blondish young man walked in again the next morning.

"You've slipped a cog, haven't you?" she asked crossly. "I haven't been paid since you were here yesterday."

"I want to see James Karnell," he announced succinctly.

She sprang up. "Why? It wont do you a bit of good! You wont get a cent any faster—"

"What do you want to see me about?" James Karnell demanded from the doorway. Hallerton was looking over his shoulder.

"Notice that this person's wages have been garnisheed," the blondish young man announced, and stuck a legal paper into Karnell's pudgy hand.

"Wha-at!" stormed James Karnell. "Say—I wont have anything like this. Miss Brown, what does this mean?"

Miss Brown had dropped limply back in her chair. She sat in white silence and did not answer.

"It means that she owes us sixty-three

dollars that we've tried every way to collect, and can't get it. So,"—with unctuous regret, "we were forced to this extreme measure, which I assure you no one regrets more than we do ourselves. We dislike to resort to drastic steps. But when a person goes ahead and spends every cent she gets every week as soon as she gets it, why, a firm has to go ahead and protect itself."

James Karnell turned angrily upon her. "Why didn't you come to me, Miss Brown," he demanded, "if you needed money? I would have loaned you some—for any proper purpose, of course. What did you want it for?"

"That,"—coldly, "is *my* business."

"And so instead of paying her next Thursday, keep it till I call," said the blondish young man.

Frances, still very white, heard, and looked at the weeks ahead. No matter how fast Vernon improved he wouldn't be out of bed for weeks—and she had borrowed already from the crippled seamstress.

Karnell flopped down in his swivel chair and glared—first at the notice in his hand, then at the sign over Miss Brown's desk warning his employees against loan agencies, then at the blondish young man, who bore it with the insouciance that a thirty-seven year old chorus girl bears the glare of the footlights. Then he glared madly at Frances, who was too numb to care. And then at Hallerton. That gave him an inspiration.

"What'll I do, Hallerton?" he demanded thickly. "I can't be dragged into court and mess with this affair. What's the easiest way out?"

Hallerton reached for the notice, read it through, scowled.

Frances lifted a haggard face. Of her own will, she would have signed many more notes before letting Hallerton know of her troubles. But since he had learned, she was conscious of a hope that he would help her. Perhaps an arrangement could be made by which she could draw at least a part of the twelve dollars.

"The easiest way for you, Karnell," Hallerton said judicially, "and the way I advise, is to—discharge her."



"Why in thunder," he shouted suddenly and fiercely, "didn't you come to me if you needed money."

"Discharge her!" Karnell echoed blankly.

"Eh?" said the blondish young man uncertainly.

"Of course," Hallerton said with emphasis. "You don't want to be bothered by that fellow coming up here every week to collect her salary! Do you?"

"No," said James Karnell slowly. "I don't. And still—it's all I can do,"—appealingly. "Of course I can't be pestered every week—Good Lord, I might be subpoenaed into court some day when I was busy! Those cases always get into court finally."

"You probably would," Hallerton said carelessly.

Frances looked at him stupidly, trying to recognize in this stranger the man whom she had thought—All at once, she knew that there was no use of thinking; there was no use living.

"Very well," sighed Karnell. "You're discharged, Miss Brown." He got out his checkbook. "Let's see. This is Saturday noon. I owe you for two days and a half. Five dollars." He wrote a check for five dollars and tossed it over.

She took it with inert fingers. The blondish young man edged over to her, and held out a sallow hand.

"Indorse it," he ordered. "You should have given it to me," he informed James Karnell.

She indorsed it listlessly—and handed it to him.

The blondish young man smiled—if a drawing apart of his flat lips could be called a smile. "When you get another job," he advised her, "split your pay as you ought to, and I wont spring this garnishee trump."

"And now," Karnell grumbled, "I've got to telephone to an employment agency for another girl. I don't see,"—angrily, "why people can't keep within their salaries. Twelve dollars is plenty for a girl to live on—unless she wants silk stockings and forty-dollar hats."

Frances did not hear him. Her dull eyes were trying to appraise a new Hallerton. It seemed that the absent look in his eyes was merely callous. If she hadn't been so numb that no muscle would obey her will, she would have laughed aloud at her former preposterous ideas concern-

ing him. Karnell now—she felt almost kindly toward Karnell. *He* had an honestly cruel face, and unpretending, heartless eyes. Karnell never impressed people as being a man to like—and trust—and dream about, when one had a few moments for dreaming.

She rose languidly. The blondish young man leaned toward her with another bit of advice. "Don't think you can sneak off and get another job without telling me where. We've got slick tracers—"

"Dear me!" Karnell grumbled. "I do dislike hunting a new girl. And this annoyance will hurt my dyspepsia. What's the number of that employment office, Hallerton?"

"Never mind telephoning," said Hallerton easily. "It wont be necessary. Since you have discharged Miss Brown, there's nothing to prevent my engaging her—if she has nothing else in view. And turn about's fair play. I'll let her take care of your correspondence—"

"What's that?" spluttered the blondish young man. "Say, what've you got up your sleeve?"

"If you know what you mean, Hallerton," Karnell snapped, "I wish you'd explain. I must admit, I don't get head nor tail!"

Frances had paused, half-way to the door. She looked at Hallerton with big, wondering eyes in which a shred of hope was creeping. Did he mean—

"You're just putting me to the bother of rehashing this garnishee," the blondish young man announced in disgust. "I thought you were acting fishy—but it wont work—"

"He can garnishee my wages wherever I work," Frances explained sadly. "You see, I assigned them—"

"You bet she did! Don't try to run any tissue paper bluff! She assigned—"

"Merely the salary that she was getting from James Karnell," Hallerton interposed suavely. "And don't you try to stretch it over anything else. If you think you can, go ahead and try. There have been a few decisions lately about the scope and limit of voluntary assignments—and I fancy you haven't forgotten them."

"You'll see," threatened the blondish

young man. "I'll be up here next week, and if you pay her, I'll see to it that you pay me too."

"You come up here next week, and I'll throw you down the elevator shaft. There is justifiable homicide, you know," Hallerton told him grimly.

"I'll sue!" spluttered the blondish young man. "This is a legal debt—I'll get a judgment!"

"You'll sue for the original principal and a legal rate of interest. And I dare you to sue for a cent more! And you know mighty well she has already paid *that*!"

And Hallerton smiled nastily. "I don't think you'll sue," he added.

The blondish young man meditated for a while in sulky silence.

Frances held her breath—but her eyes were glowing with a happy light. Just then it didn't seem very important whether she or the blondish young man collected the salary. Happiness wasn't a matter of money—and being out of debt—

"Oh, well," the representative of the Puritan Loan Co. finally grumbled, sliding toward the door, "if you folks are going to take advantage of a legal technicality—that isn't fair. We,"—virtuously, "don't care about dealing with people who are tricky."

Then he slid out.

"I'm very glad, Hallerton," said James Karnell, "that you outwitted that unpleasant fellow. I—I really hated to discharge Miss Brown. A new girl might chew gum. You never know what

you'll get from an employment office."

"You are wonderfully good," Frances told Hallerton, with tremulous lips.

"I've got used to your spelling," Hallerton told her. "A new girl might have a different arrangement of *I's*—Why in thunder," he shouted suddenly and fiercely, "didn't you come to me if you needed money?"

Karnell jumped—almost out of his chair; and his meager lashes flopped rapidly up and down over his amazed eyes. He had never before heard the calm Hallerton shout.

"B-be-c-cause," stammered Frances, "I—I didn't want to."

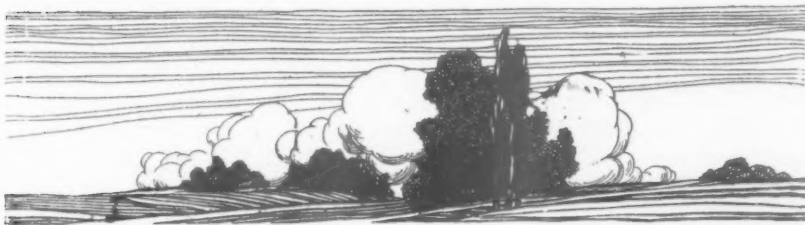
Hallerton glared at her. And Karnell's lashes jerked faster. He had never before seen a furious glare in Hallerton's peaceful eyes.

"Nice opinion you must have of me!" Hallerton shouted—and Karnell, watching with bulging eyes, saw the fierce glare suddenly give way to another expression.

It was a peculiar expression; it took Karnell, old, fat and dyspeptic, back to a time when the curve of a pink cheek was vastly more important than the virtue of a pepsin tablet.

As unobtrusively as possible he got out of the swivel chair and waddled to the door—he felt an intruder in his own office.

"I suppose," he meditated sadly, "that I might just as well get in touch with that darned old employment office after all."





The Lure

A Story of Kazan, the Wolf-Dog

By James Oliver Curwood

Author of "Flower of the North," etc.

THE days of famine were at their worst when Kazan, the wolf-dog, and Gray Wolf, his wild, blind mate, killed a big bull moose. The storm from the north, in which neither man nor hoofed beast could live, had ceased. But that storm had buried the whole of the northern wilderness, and the intense cold that followed still held the creatures that furnished food for fang and claw in the warm retreats they had found in rock and windfall and under the deep snow.

For the flesh-eating animals, with the exception of the mink and the ermine, who could follow the rabbits into their burrows, these were the days of greatest starvation and death.

The kill of the old bull moose came just in time to save Kazan. Being three-quarters dog, with only a quarter-strain of wolf in him, he could not stand hunger like his wild mate. Six days and six nights without food, and with the temperature ranging between fifty and seventy degrees below zero, had transformed him into a shadow of the old, fierce, fighting Kazan—the sledge-dog freed from bondage.

After the fight, in which Gray Wolf helped him to kill the wounded bull, he lay down exhausted in the blood-stained

snow, while faithful Gray Wolf, still filled with the endurance of her wild-wolf breed, tore fiercely at the thick skin on the bull's neck to lay open the red flesh. When she had done this she did not eat, but ran to Kazan's side, and whined softly as she muzzled him with her nose. After that they feasted, crouching side by side at the bull's neck, and tearing at the warm, sweet flesh.

The last pale light of the northern day was fading swiftly into night when they drew back, gorged until there were no longer the hollows in their sides. The faint wind died away. The clouds that had hung in the sky during the day drifted eastward, and the moon shone brilliant and clear. For an hour the night continued to grow lighter. To the brilliance of the moon and the stars there was added now the pale fires of the aurora borealis, shivering and flashing over the Pole.

Its hissing, crackling monotone, like the creaking of steel sledge-runners on frost-filled snow, came faintly to the ears of Kazan and Gray Wolf.

As yet they had not gone a hundred yards from the dead bull, and at the first sound of that strange mystery in the northern skies they stopped and listened to it, alert and suspicious. Then



of Man

ILLUSTRATED
BY FRANK
B. HOFFMAN

they laid their ears aslant and trotted slowly back to the meat they had killed. Instinct told them that it was theirs only by right of fang. They had fought to kill it. And it was in the Law of the Wild that they would have to fight to keep it. In good hunting days they would have gone on, and wandered under the moon and the stars. But long days and nights of starvation had taught them something different now.

On that clear and stormless night following the days of plague and famine, a hundred thousand hungry creatures came out from their retreats to hunt for food. For eighteen hundred miles east and west and a thousand miles north and south, slim, gaunt-bellied creatures hunted under the moon and the stars. Something told Kazan and Gray Wolf that this hunt was on, and never for an instant did they cease their vigilance. At last they lay down in the edge of the spruce thicket, and waited. Gray Wolf muzzled Kazan gently with her blind face. The uneasy whine in her throat was a warning to him. Then she sniffed the air, and listened—sniffed and listened.

Suddenly every muscle in their bodies grew rigid. Something living had passed near them, something that they could

not see, or hear, and scarcely scent. It came again, as mysterious as a shadow, and then out of the air there floated down as silently as a huge snowflake a great white owl. Kazan saw the hungry winged creature settle on the bull's shoulder. Like a flash he was out from his cover, Gray Wolf a yard behind him. With an angry snarl he lunged at the white robber, and his jaws snapped on empty air. His leap carried him clean over the bull. He turned, but the owl was gone.

Nearly all of his old strength had returned to him now. He trotted about the bull, the hair along his spine bristling like a brush, his eyes wide and menacing. He snarled at the still air. His jaws clicked, and he sat back on his haunches and faced the blood-stained trail that the moose had left before he died. Again that instinct as infallible as reason told him that danger would come from there.

Like a red ribbon the trail ran back through the wilderness. The little, swift-moving ermine were everywhere this night, looking like white rats as they dodged about in the moonlight. They were first to find the trail, and with all the ferocity of their blood-eating nature, followed it with quick, excited leaps. A

fox caught the scent of it a quarter of a mile to windward, and came nearer. From out of a deep windfall a beady-eyed, thin-bellied fisher-cat came forth, and stopped with his feet in the crimson ribbon.

It was the fisher-cat that brought Kazan out from under his cover of spruce again. In the moonlight there was a sharp, quick fight, a snarling and scratching, a cat-like yowl of pain, and the fisher forgot his hunger in flight. Kazan returned to Gray Wolf with a lacerated and bleeding nose. Gray Wolf licked it sympathetically, while Kazan stood rigid and listening.

The fox swung swiftly away with the wind, warned by the sounds of conflict.

He was not a fighter, but a murderer who killed from behind, and a little later he leaped upon an owl and tore it into bits for the half pound of flesh within the mass of feathers.

But nothing could drive back those little white outlaws of the wilderness—the ermine. They would have stolen between the feet of man to get at the warm flesh and blood of the freshly killed bull. Kazan hunted them savagely. They were too quick for him, more like elusive flashes in the moonlight than things of life. They burrowed under the old bull's body, and fed while Kazan raved and filled his mouth with snow. Gray Wolf sat placidly on her

haunches. The little ermine did not trouble her, and after a time Kazan realized this, and flung himself down beside her, panting and exhausted.

For a long time after that the night was almost unbroken by sound. Once, in the far distance, there came the cry of a wolf, and now and then, to punctuate the deathly silence, the snow owl hooted in blood-curdling protest from his home in the spruce tops. The moon was straight above the old bull when Gray Wolf scented the first real danger. Instantly she gave the warning to Kazan and faced the bloody trail, her lithe body quivering, her fangs gleaming in the starlight, a snarling whine in her throat. Only in the face of their dead-



With an angry snarl, Kazan lunged at the white robber, and his jaws snapped on empty air.

liest enemy—the lynx—the terrible fighter who had blinded her long ago in that battle on the Sun Rock, did she give such warning as this to Kazan. He sprang ahead of her, ready for battle even before he caught the scent of the gray, beautiful creature of death stealing over the trail.

Then came the interruption. From a mile away there burst forth a single, fierce, long-drawn howl.

After all, that was the cry of the true master of the wilderness—the wolf. It was the cry of hunger. It was the cry that sent men's blood running more swiftly through their veins, that brought the moose and the deer to their feet, shivering in every limb—the cry that wailed like a note of death through swamp and forest and over the snow-smothered ridges, until its faintest echoes reached for miles into the starlit night.

Then there was silence, and in that awesome stillness Kazan and Gray Wolf stood shoulder to shoulder facing the cry, and in response to that cry there worked within them a strange and mystic change, for what they had heard was not a warning or a menace, but the call of Brotherhood. Away off there—beyond the lynx, and the fox, and the fisher-cat, were the creatures of their kind, the wild-wolf pack, to which the right to all flesh and blood was common—in which existed that savage socialism of the wilderness, the Brotherhood of the Wolf. And Gray Wolf, settling back on her haunches, sent forth the response to that cry—a wailing, triumphant note that told her hungry brethren there was feasting at the end of the trail.

And the lynx, between those two cries, sneaked off into the wide and moonlit spaces of the forest.

II

On their haunches Kazan and Gray Wolf waited. Five minutes passed, ten—fifteen—and Gray Wolf became uneasy. No response had followed her call. Again she howled, with Kazan quivering and listening beside her, and again there followed that dead stillness of the

night. This was not the way of the pack. She knew that it had not gone beyond the reach of her voice, and its silence puzzled her. And then, in a flash, it came to them both that the pack, or the single wolf whose cry they had heard, was very near them. The scent was warm. A few moments later Kazan saw a moving object in the moonlight. It was followed by another, and still another, until there were five slouching in a half circle about them, seventy yards away. Then they laid themselves flat in the snow, and were motionless.

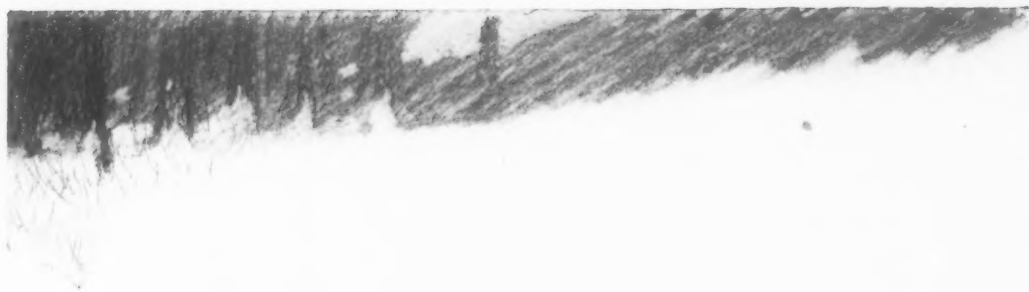
A snarl turned Kazan's eyes to Gray Wolf. His blind mate had drawn back. Her white fangs gleamed menacingly in the starlight. Her ears were flat. Kazan was puzzled. Why was she signaling danger to him when it was the wolf, and not the lynx, out there in the snow? And why did the wolves not come in and feast? Slowly he moved toward them, and Gray Wolf called to him with her whine. He paid no attention to her, but went on, stepping lightly, his head high in the air, his spine bristling.

In the scent of the strangers, Kazan was catching something now that was strangely familiar. It drew him toward them more swiftly, and when at last he stopped twenty yards from where the little group lay flattened in the snow, his thick brush waved slightly. One of the animals sprang up and approached. The others followed, and in another moment Kazan was in the midst of them, smelling and smelled, and wagging his tail. These were dogs, and not wolves.

In some lonely cabin in the wilderness their master had died, and they had taken to the forests. They still bore signs of the sledge-traces. About their necks were moosehide collars. The hair was worn short at their flanks, and one still dragged after him three feet of corded *babiche* trace. Their eyes gleamed red and hungry in the glow of the moon and the stars. They were thin, and gaunt and starved, and Kazan suddenly turned and trotted ahead of them to the side of the dead bull. Then he fell back and sat proudly on his haunches



They began slowly to circle, and now the watching sledge-dogs drew a step or two nearer, and their jaws drooled nervously and their red eyes glared as they waited for the fatal moment.



beside Gray Wolf, listening to the snapping of jaws and the rending of flesh as the starved pack feasted.

Gray Wolf slunk closer to Kazan. She muzzled his neck and Kazan gave her a swift, dog-like caress of his tongue, assuring her that all was well. She flattened herself in the snow when the dogs had finished, and came up in their dog way to sniff at her, and make closer acquaintance with Kazan. Kazan towered over her guardingly. One huge, red-eyed dog, who still dragged the bit of *babiche* trace, muzzled Gray Wolf's soft neck for a fraction of a second too long, and Kazan uttered a savage snarl of warning. The dog drew back, and for a moment their fangs gleamed over Gray Wolf's blind face. It was the Challenge of the Breed.

The big husky was the leader of the pack, and if one of the other dogs had snarled at him as Kazan snarled he

would have leaped at its throat. But in Kazan, standing fierce and half wild over Gray Wolf, he recognized none of the serfdom of the sledge-dogs. It was master facing master; in Kazan it was more than that, for he was Gray Wolf's mate. In an instant more he would have leaped over her body, to fight for her, more than for the right of leadership. But the big husky turned away sullenly, growling, still snarling, and vented his rage by nipping fiercely at the flank of one of his sledge-mates.

Gray Wolf understood what had happened, though she could not see. She shrank closer to Kazan. She knew that the moon and the stars had looked down on that thing that always meant death—the challenge to the right of mate. With her luring coyness, whining, and softly muzzling his shoulder and neck, she tried to draw Kazan away from the pad-beaten circle in which the bull lay. Kazan's answer was an ominous rolling of smothered thunder deep down in his throat. He lay down beside her, licked her blind face swiftly, and faced the stranger dogs.

The moon sank lower and lower, and at last dropped behind the western forests. The stars grew paler. One by one they faded from the sky, and after a time there followed the cold gray dawn of the north. In that dawn the big husky leader rose from the hole he had made in the snow and returned to the bull. Kazan, alert, was on his feet in an instant and stood also close to the bull. The two circled ominously, their heads lowered, their crests bristling. The husky drew two or three steps away, and

Kazan crouched at the bull's neck and began tearing at the frozen flesh. He was not hungry. But in this way he showed his right to the flesh, his defiance of the right of the big husky.

For a few seconds he forgot Gray Wolf. The husky had slipped back like a shadow, and now he stood again over Gray Wolf, sniffing her neck and body. Then he whined. In that whine were the passion, the invitation, the demand of the Wild, and so quickly that the eye could scarcely follow her movement. Gray Wolf sank her fangs in the husky's shoulder.

A gray streak—nothing more tangible than a streak of gray, silent and terrible, shot through the dawn-gloom. It was Kazan. He came without a snarl, without a cry, and in a moment he and the husky were in the throes of terrific battle.

The four other huskies ran in quickly, and stood waiting a dozen paces from the combatants. Gray Wolf lay crouched on her belly. The giant husky and the quarter-strain wolf-dog were not fighting like sledge-dog or wolf. For a few moments rage and hatred made them



A third time the club was raised, and this time Kazan met it in

fight like mongrels. Both had holds. Now one was down, and now the other, and so swiftly did they change their positions that the four waiting sledge-dogs were puzzled and stood motionless. Under other conditions they would have leaped upon the first of the fighters to be thrown upon his back and torn him to pieces. That was the way of the wolf



midair, and his teeth ripped the length of the man's forearm.

and the wolf-dog. But now they stood back, hesitating and fearful.

The big husky had never been beaten in battle. Great Dane ancestors had given him a huge bulk, and a jaw that could crush an ordinary dog's head. But in Kazan he was meeting not only the dog and the wolf, but all that was best of the two. And Kazan had the ad-

vantage of a few hours of rest and a full stomach. More than that, he was fighting for Gray Wolf. His fangs had sunk deep in the husky's shoulder, and the husky's long teeth met through the hide and flesh of his neck. An inch deeper, and they would have pierced his jugular. Kazan knew this, as he crunched his enemy's shoulderbone, and every instant—even in their fiercest struggling—he was guarding against a second and more successful lunge of those powerful jaws.

At last the lunge came, and quicker than the wolf itself Kazan freed himself and leaped back. His chest dripped blood, but he did not feel the hurt. They began slowly to circle, and now the watching sled-dogs drew a step or two nearer,

and their jaws drooled nervously and their red eyes glared as they waited for the fatal moment. Their eyes were on the big husky. He became the pivot of Kazan's wider circle now, and he limped as he turned. His shoulder was broken. His ears were flattened as he watched Kazan.

Kazan's ears were erect, and his feet

touched the snow lightly. All his fighting cleverness and all his caution had returned to him. The blind rage of a few moments was gone, and he fought now as he had fought his deadliest enemy, the long-clawed lynx. Five times he circled around the husky, and then like a shot he was in, sending his whole weight against the husky's shoulder, with the momentum of a ten-foot leap behind it. This time he did not try for a hold, but slashed at the husky's jaws. It was the deadliest of all attacks when that merciless tribunal of death stood waiting for the first fall of the vanquished. The huge dog was thrown from his feet. For a fatal moment he rolled upon his side, and in that moment his four sledge-mates were upon him. All of their hatred of the weeks and months in which the long-fanged leader had bullied them in the traces was concentrated upon him now, and he was literally torn into pieces.

Kazan pranced to Gray Wolf's side, and with a joyful whine she laid her head over his neck. Twice he had fought the Fight of Death for her. Twice he had won. And in her blindness Gray Wolf's soul—if soul she had—rose in exultation to the cold gray sky, and her breast panted against Kazan's shoulder as she listened to the crunching of fangs in the flesh and bone of the foe her lord and master had overthrown.

III

Followed days of feasting on the frozen flesh of the old bull. In vain Gray Wolf tried to lure Kazan off into the forests and the swamps. Day by day the temperature rose. There was hunting now. And Gray Wolf wanted to be alone—with Kazan. But with Kazan, as with most men, leadership and power roused new sensations. And he was the leader of the dog-pack, as he had once been a leader among the wolves. Not only Gray Wolf followed at his flank now, but the four huskies trailed behind him. Once more he was experiencing that triumph and strange thrill that he had almost forgotten, and only Gray Wolf, in that eternal night of her blind-

ness, felt with dread foreboding the danger into which his newly achieved czarship might lead him.

For three days and three nights they remained in the neighborhood of the dead moose, ready to defend it against others, and yet each day and each night growing less vigilant in their guard. Then came the fourth night, on which they killed a young doe. Kazan led in that chase, and for the first time, in the excitement of having the pack at his back, he left his blind mate behind. When they came to the kill he was the first to leap at its soft throat. And not until he had begun to tear at the doe's flesh did the others dare to eat. He was master. He could send them back with a snarl. At the gleam of his fangs they crouched quivering on their bellies in the snow.

Kazan's blood was a foment of brute exultation, and the excitement and fascination that came with the possession of new power took the place of Gray Wolf each day a little more. She came in half an hour after the kill, and there was no longer the lithesome alertness to her slender legs, or gladness in the tilt of her ears or the poise of her head. She did not eat much of the doe. Her blind face was turned always in Kazan's direction. Wherever he moved she followed with her unseeing eyes, as if expecting each moment his old signal to her—that low throat-note that had called to her so often when they were alone in the wilderness.

In Kazan, as leader of the pack, there was working a curious change. If his mates had been wolves it would not have been difficult for Gray Wolf to have lured him away. But Kazan was among his own kind. He was a dog. And they were dogs. Fires that had burned down, and ceased to warm him, flamed up in him anew. In his life with Gray Wolf one thing had oppressed him as it could not oppress her, and that thing was loneliness. Nature had created him of that kind which requires companionship—not of one, but of many. It had given him birth that he might listen to and obey the commands of the voice of man. He had grown to hate

men, but of the dogs—his kind—he was a part. He had been happy with Gray Wolf, happier than he had ever been in the companionship of men and his blood-brothers. But he had been a long time separated from the life that had once been his, and the call of blood made him for a time forget. And only Gray Wolf, with that wonderful super-instinct which nature was giving her in place of her lost sight, foresaw the end to which it was leading him.

Each day the temperature continued to rise, until when the sun was warmest the snow began to thaw a little. This was two weeks after the fight near the bull. Gradually the pack had swung eastward, until it was now fifty miles east and twenty miles south of the old home under the windfall. More than ever Gray Wolf began to long for their old nest under the fallen trees. Again, with those first promises of spring in sunshine and air, came also for the second time in her life the promise of approaching motherhood.

But her efforts to draw Kazan back were unavailing, and in spite of her protest he wandered each day a little farther east and south at the head of his pack.

Instinct impelled the four huskies to move in that direction. They had not yet been long enough a part of the wild to forget the necessity of man, and in that direction there was man. In that direction, and not far from them now, was the Hudson Bay Company's post to which they and their dead master owed their allegiance. Kazan did not know this, but one day something happened to bring back visions and desires that widened still more the gulf between him and Gray Wolf.

They had come to the cap of a ridge when something stopped them. It was a man's voice, crying shrilly that word of long ago that had so often stirred the blood in Kazan's own veins—"M'hoosh! m'hoosh! m'hoosh!"—and from the ridge they looked down upon the open space of the plain, where a team of six dogs were trotting ahead of a sledge, with a man running behind them, urging them on at every other step with

that cry of "M'hoosh! m'hoosh! m'hoosh!"

Trembling and undecided, the four huskies and the wolf-dog stood on the ridge, with Gray Wolf cringing behind them. Not until man and dogs and sledge had disappeared did they move, and then they trotted down to the trail, and sniffed at it whiningly and excitedly. For a mile or two they followed it, Kazan and his mates padding fearlessly in the trail. Gray Wolf hung back, traveling twenty yards to the right of them, with the hot man-scent driving the blood feverishly through her brain. Only her love for Kazan—and the faith she still had in him—kept her that near.

At the edge of a swamp Kazan halted, and turned away from the trail. With the desire that was growing in him there was still that old suspicion which nothing could quite wipe out—the suspicion that was an inheritance of his quarter-strain of wolf. Gray Wolf whined joyfully when he turned into the forest, and drew so close to him that her shoulder rubbed against Kazan's as they traveled side by side.

The "slush" snows followed fast after this. And the slush snows meant spring—and the emptying of the wilderness of human life. Kazan and his mates soon began to scent the presence and the movement of this life. They were now within thirty miles of the post. For a hundred miles on all sides of them the trappers were moving in with their late winter's catch of furs. From east and west, south and north, all trails led to the post. The pack was caught in the mesh of them. For a week, not a day passed that they did not cross a fresh trail, and sometimes two or three.

Gray Wolf was haunted by constant fear. In her blindness she knew that they were surrounded by the menace of men. To Kazan what was coming to pass had more and more ceased to fill him with fear and caution. Three times that week he heard the shouts of men—and once he heard a white man's laughter and the barkings of dogs as their master tossed them their daily feed of fish. In the air he caught the pungent scent of camp-fires, and one night, in

the far distance, he heard a wild snatch of song, followed by the yelping and barking of a dog-pack.

Slowly and surely the lure of man drew him nearer to the post—a mile to-night, two miles to-morrow, but always nearer. And Gray Wolf, fighting her losing fight to the end, sensed the nearness of that hour when he would respond to the final call, and she would be left alone.

IV

These were days of activity and excitement at the fur Company's post, the days of accounting, of profit, and of pleasure—the days when the wilderness poured in its treasure of fur, to be sent a little later to London and Paris and the capitals of Europe. And this year there was more than the usual interest in the fore-gathering of the forest people. The small-pox plague had wrought its terrible havoc during the winter, and not until the fur-hunters had come to answer to the spring roll-call would it be known accurately who had lived, and who had died.

The Chippewyans and halfbreeds from the south began to arrive first, with their teams of mongrel curs, picked up along the borders of civilization. Close after them came the hunters from the western Barren Lands, bringing with them loads of white fox and caribou skins, and an army of big-footed, long-legged Mackenzie hounds that pulled like horses and wailed like whipped puppies when the huskies and Eskimo dogs set upon them. Packs of fierce Labrador dogs, never vanquished except by death, came from close to Hudson's Bay. Team after team of little yellow and gray Eskimo dogs, as quick with their fangs as were their black and swift-running masters with their hands and feet, met the much larger and darker-colored Malemutes from the Athabasca. Enemies of all these packs of fierce huskies trailed in from all sides, fighting, snapping, and snarling, with the lust of killing deep born in them from their wolf progenitors.

There was no cessation in the battle of the fangs. It began with the first

brute arrivals. It continued from dawn through the day, and around the camp-fires at night. There was never an end to the strife between the dogs, and between the men and the dogs. The snow was trailed and stained with blood, and the scent of it added greater fierceness to the wolf-breeds.

Half a dozen battles were fought to the death each day and night. Those that died were chiefly the south-bred curs—mixtures of mastiff, Great Dane, and sheep-dogs—and the fatally slow Mackenzie hounds. About the post rose the smoke of a hundred camp-fires, and about these fires gathered the women and the children of the hunters. When the snow was no longer fit for sledging, Williams, the factor, noted that there were many who had not come, and the accounts of these he later scratched out of his ledgers, knowing that they were victims of the plague.

At last came the night of the Big Carnival. For weeks and months women and children and men had been looking forward to this. In scores of forest cabins, in smoke-blackened tepees, and even in the frozen homes of the little Eskimos, anticipation of this wild night of pleasure had given an added zest to life. It was the Big Circus—the good time given twice each year by the Company to its people.

This year, to offset the memory of plague and death, the factor had put forth unusual exertions. His hunters had killed four fat caribou. In the clearing there were great piles of dry logs, and in the center of all there rose eight ten-foot tree-butts, crotched at the top; and from crotch to crotch there rested stout saplings stripped of bark, and on each sapling was spitted the carcass of a caribou, to be roasted whole by the heat of the fire beneath. The fires were lighted at dusk, and Williams himself started the first of those wild songs of the Northland—the Song of the Caribou—as the flames leaped up.

"Oh, ze cariboo-oo-oo, ze
cariboo-oo-oo,
He roas' on high,
Jes' under ze sky,
Ze beeg white cariboo-oo-oo!"

"Now!" he yelled. "Now—all together!" And carried away by his enthusiasm, the forest people awakened from their silence of months, and the song burst forth in a savage frenzy that reached to the skies.

"Oh, ze cariboo-oo-oo, ze
cariboo-oo-oo,
He brown 'n' juic' 'n' sweet,
He roas' on high,
Jes' under ze sky,
He ready now to come an eat!"

In that tumult of sound rose all of the wild voice of the North—the wailing whoop of the Sarcees, Chippewyans, and Crees, the clacking, throaty chant of the brown-faced, white-eyed Eskimo from beyond the Barrens, the louder, more confident voice of the white and the half-breed.

Williams had brought forth an old violin, and on three strings he scraped wildly now, dancing and gesticulating in the firelight like a gargoyle gone mad. The enthusiasm and the excitement spread. It fired men's blood like liquor, and now from the farther shadows there joined the deep, hollow notes of the Eskimo drums, made of bones and narwhal skin. From the edge of the forest men ran in, dragging fresh logs over the snow.

In every face there was laughter, and joy, and good fellowship. Rivals of the trap-line joined hands in grotesque dancing, and even the Sarcees and the Eskimo—rival lords of the southern arctic Barrens, and whose forebears had cut each other's throats—thumped shoulders and grinned friendship. No liquor to stir their blood to fighting foment—stirred only by the tonic of the keen air, heavy now with rich perfume of roasting flesh and simmering coffee, they forgot their birthright of silence, and the starry vault of heaven rang with their exultation.

Two miles to the south and west, that first thunder of human voice reached the ears of Kazan and Gray Wolf and the masterless huskies. And with the voices of men they heard now the excited howlings of dogs. The huskies faced the direction of the sounds, mov-

ing restlessly, and whining. For a few moments Kazan stood as though carved of rock. Then he turned his head, and his first look was to Gray Wolf. She had slunk back a dozen feet, and lay crouched under the thick cover of a balsam shrub. Her body, legs and neck were flattened in the snow. She made no sound, but her lips were drawn back, and her teeth shone white.

Kazan trotted back to her, sniffed at her blind face, and whined. Gray Wolf still did not move. He returned to the dogs, and his jaws opened and closed with a snap. Still more clearly came the wild voice of the carnival, and no longer to be held back by Kazan's leadership, the four huskies dropped their heads and slunk like shadows in its direction. Kazan hesitated, urging Gray Wolf. But not a muscle of Gray Wolf's body moved. She would have followed him in the face of fire, but not in the face of man. Not a sound escaped her ears. She heard the quick fall of Kazan's feet as he left her. In another moment she knew that he was gone. Then—and not until then—did she lift her head, and from her soft throat there broke a whimpering cry.

It was her last call to Kazan. But stronger than that, there was running through Kazan's excited blood the call of man and of dog. The huskies were far in advance of him now, and for a few moments he raced madly to overtake them. Then he slowed down until he was trotting, and a hundred yards farther on he stopped. Less than a mile away he could see where the flames of the great fires were reddening the sky. He gazed back to see if Gray Wolf was following, and then went on until he struck an open and hard-traveled trail. It was beaten with the footprints of men and dogs, and over it two of the caribou had been dragged a day or two before.

At last he came to the thinned out strip of timber that surrounded the clearing, and the flare of the flames was in his eyes. The bedlam of sound that came to him now was like fire in his brain. He heard the song and the laughter of men, the shrill cries of women and children, the barking and snarling

and fighting of a hundred dogs. He wanted to rush out and join them, to become again a part of what he had once been. Yard by yard he sneaked through the thin timber until he reached the edge of the clearing. There he stood in the shadow of a spruce and looked out upon life as he had once lived it, trembling, wistful, and yet hesitating in that final moment.

A hundred yards away was the savage circle of men and dogs and fire. His nostrils were filled with the rich aroma of the roasting caribou, and as he crouched down, still with that wolfish caution that Gray Wolf had taught him, men with long poles brought the huge carcasses crashing down upon the melting snow about the fires. In one great rush the horde of wild revelers crowded in with bared knives, and a snarling mass of dogs closed in behind them. In another moment Kazan had forgotten Gray Wolf—had forgotten all that the wild had taught him, and like a gray streak was across the open.

The dogs were surging back when he reached them, with half a dozen of the factor's men lashing them in the faces with long caribou-gut whips. The sting of a lash fell in a fierce cut over an Eskimo dog's shoulder, and in snapping at the lash his fangs struck Kazan's rump. With lightning swiftness Kazan returned the cut, and in an instant the jaws of the dogs had met. In another instant they were down, and Kazan had the Eskimo dog by the throat.

With shouts the men rushed in. Again and again their whips cut like knives through the air. Their blows fell on Kazan, who was uppermost, and as he felt the burning pain of the scourging whips there flooded him all at once the fierce memory of the days of old—the

days of the Club and the Lash. He snarled. Slowly he loosened his hold of the Eskimo dog's throat. And then, out of the *mêlée* of dogs and men, there sprang another man—with a club! It fell on Kazan's back, and the force of it sent him flat into the snow. It was raised again. Behind the club there was a face—a brutal, fire-reddened face. It was such a face that had driven Kazan into the wild, and as the club fell again he evaded the full weight of its blow, and his fangs gleamed like ivory knives. A third time the club was raised, and this time Kazan met it in midair, and his teeth ripped the length of the man's forearm.

"Good God!" shrieked the man in pain, and Kazan caught the gleam of a rifle barrel as he sped toward the forest. A shot followed. Something like a red-hot coal ran the length of Kazan's hip, and deep in the forest he stopped to lick at the burning furrow where the bullet had gone just deep enough to take the skin and hair from his flesh.

Gray Wolf was still waiting under the balsam shrub when Kazan returned to her. Joyously she sprang forth to meet him. Once more man had sent back the old Kazan to her. He muzzled her neck and face, and stood for a few moments with his head resting across her back, listening to the distant sound.

Then, with ears laid flat, he set out straight into the north and west. And now Gray Wolf ran shoulder to shoulder with him, like the Gray Wolf of the days before the dog-pack came; for that same wonderful thing that lay beyond the realm of reason told her that once more she was comrade and mate, and that their trail that night was leading to their old home under the windfall.

The Eternal Cycle

By George Bronson-Howard

Author of "An Enemy to Society," "Snobs,"
"The Only Law," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
WALLACE MORGAN

....Where the chorus-girls, they laugh and shine;
And despise the guys that open wine;
But their faithless, faithful hearts enshrine
In the boys that breeze around....

—Ballad of Letty Lee.

SOME years ago, before Richard K. Rubblejay had seen or heard of Letty Lee, a malignant microbe, having just murdered a man by breeding upon a weak membrane, hovered pensively over a sugar-bowl, wherein lay the spawn of a gnat. As one gnat, a hardly perceptible black mite, leaped in air, he seemed a giant to the helpless microbe.

Soon after, a housefly skimming the sugar-bowl, provided the life of the young gnat with a similar tragic climax; clinging to the wall, some days later, torpid, drowsy, gorged, the fly, in its turn, came to an end through a hungry spider.

A longer period of time elapsed; then one morning, while the windows were open, a sudden wintry gust precipitated the spider into the garden, where a hen clucked out of bounds. A week after, when the spider was a forgotten memory, a fox stole the hen—the same fox whose brush now hangs in what was formerly Mr. Casimir Smith's country home, "Wildwood," afterwards the property of Richard K. Rubblejay.

It was a year after the hen's abduction that Smith was in at Reynard's death. Two more years and Rubblejay was in at Smith's—said Smith having extended his hunting to Wall Street, where he was as the fox had been to his own beagles.

Six months later, Mr. Rubblejay went into an obscure restaurant just off Broadway and met Letty Lee. You may urge that the extended history of any other victim of this cycle would prove as profitable. But we propose to be arbitrary and to tell in detail only this one. For this reason and no other, Mr. Rubblejay merits

a more extended description than his predecessors: Microbe, Gnat, Fly, Spider, Hen, Fox and Casimir Smith; each, like himself, erstwhile conqueror and whilom victim.

WE have acquaintance with a dramatic reviewer who once found cause for loud lamentation because dramatists and novelists have pictured money-mad millionaires as mentally moribund. "Away with these spineless and untrue miscreations and miscreants," he writes. "Oh, for an author who will draw for us the true character of one of those strong, silent men who rule our country and bend the Constitution to their will."

Here is that author; and here is that character: Mr. Richard K. Rubblejay, American millionaire. He is not a miscreant, because he has no imagination; but, also, he is not strong, any more than Sir Fly or Sir Spider; strong men do not win from the weak; they are ashamed. He is silent, because he has nothing much to say: those portions of his cerebrum and cerebellum not utilized for spinning such webs as catch dollars, having withered, shrunk, and almost disappeared. When he drinks, his thoughts take on the color of his flushed face; and he finds exquisite humor in smoking-room stories.

In his younger days as a broker, through some certificates of stock forfeited to him because certain margins had not been protected, Rubblejay became the owner of one quarter of a newly promoted copper mine. The stock was almost worthless at the time, but his private investigations convinced him



When Mr. Rubblejay entered, in pursuit of a brilliantly beautiful young woman, he saw her, and many others, grouped about one big table. Up rose Wilson, saying: "I don't know you, Mister, but you can't give any solitaire session here to-night. You're spoiling my party. Come on over here. Billy—a chair for His Nobs."

that the mine lacked only sufficient capital to develop it. Therefore, as a broker, he loaned this necessary capital to a combination of the other stockholders' interests; and, when his money had been sunk in machinery, he "called" the loan. As the actual results achieved by the combination were as yet too intangible to carry to the minds of other capitalists Rubblejay's conviction regarding the presence of vast quantities of copper, his "call" could not be met; and the mine, with all improvements, passed into the sole possession of Rubblejay.

Thus, you will see what is meant when he is described as other than a strong man—strong men having great hearts. With a fortune obtained from the copper afterwards mined in his interests,



Mr. Rubblejay was necessary to the circle of intrigue that decides, in advance, whether listed stocks shall rise or fall. Automatically, his money bred money. But as for pleasure, even his ocean-going yacht yielded him little except expense accounts. He had not time to enjoy one motor car or one house, let alone six of one and half a dozen of the other; his business needed all the concentration of one so limited.

His brain was less shrunken than those of his colleagues, however; for, after twenty years of business, he managed to escape, "to enjoy life." Not society; he did not want another struggle, another steady eye on the safety-valve. "The world," he said grandly, having read "Monte Cristo," "for mine." He had a vision of at least one of *Haroun-*

al-Raschid's enjoyments; it took the form of a harem. Ah, he was a wicked boy!

Mr. Rubblejay, "retired," toured the world, hastening more and more, each step of the way, to get back to the country of the only people who really respect money. But we do not find him sufficiently interesting to view in detail again until, one night shortly after his return, he pushed open the door of that obscure restaurant just off Broadway.

II

There is no explaining such a night as the one that followed. Its like cannot be arranged, anticipated, or reproduced at will. Had Mr. Rubblejay entered Santayana's on any average night, he

would have seen some tired-looking girls eating club sandwiches and drinking ale in mugs; some young men, careless of the girls' presence, discussing their different conceptions of "Art;" others with books propped up against decanters; a few more reading aloud from that newspaper issued at midnight for theatrical and racing folk who like to know the worst before they retire. Neither music nor excitement; only these commonplace things; but, this night, Paul Wilson, a sad-eyed frequenter, was glad-eyed. He had his first reason for believing that horses had become sensible to the logic of his faultless "system;" but with a suspicion that the book-makers would regain the majority of his big "win," he had determined it should serve at least to lay a foundation of future credit. So he proceeded to put under obligation every regular patron of his favorite tavern; and thus, when Mr. Rubblejay entered, in pursuit of a brilliantly beautiful young woman, he saw her, and many others, grouped about one big table that but recently had been four.

"And, say, you two!"—Mr. Wilson addressed on their entrance two young men, whom, so often, he had heard define Art to their own complete satisfaction. "Coupla chairs, Billy. My treat, boys; I win six hundred dollars to-day."

They required no urging. They would have sat less with art and more with girls had they been able to pay for other food than their own; the girls understood this and made them welcome; in bankruptcy there is brotherhood. Brothers, too, the men of the propped-up books, who wrote many more magazine stories than they published, an occasional vaudeville playlet, or, perhaps, like Burton Jarvis, a play that had failed or that was bringing in only enough to keep one alive until another showed signs of life; also small-part actors, and boys who bet on races, existing, meanwhile, by the sale of "tips" to people who knew as little of logic as the horses. The girls were either in the chorus of the "big show" or were of the Ibsen theatre over the way. All patronized Santayana's exclusively because of club sandwiches at

fifteen cents and chicken-dinners at forty.

To-night, however, expense was no object, and Mr. Wilson's "table" gorged itself on all the other tables, until, stranger or no stranger, it really would not do for one lonely person to sit like a wrecked sailor on a raft or a lost soul outside of St. Peter's gates; so up rose Wilson and bowed to Rubblejay.

"I don't know you, Mister, but nobody's going to have any solitaire session here to-night. You're spoiling my party. Come on over here. Billy—a chair for His Nobs."

Despite the offensively familiar appearance of this address, it was music to Mr. Rubblejay, who was tired of bended backs and concealed curses, showy subservience and silent scorn. When not tipping servants, he was paying for friends. When doing neither, he was avoided, nay, shunned, except by a third class that took by some form of stealth what he had not meant to give.

He saw none of these at the table before him; only young girls flushed and prattling to young men eager of admiration and speech. As for Mr. Wilson, after urging Billy to put "*it*" on the table if he had not another bucket, he turned immediately from Rubblejay to continue his attempt at the fascination of Miss Letty Lee.

The young man who sat opposite seemed unconcerned, which annoyed Letty. She was that young man's personal property and it behooved him to show jealousy. That he did not, was one strong reason why his hold upon her was so absolute. He was that Burton Jarvis, who had written an unsuccessful play, which, published in England, had won the praise of Shavians and Fabians, much the same thing. His companion, a young reporter—one of those who talked about art—had seen the Jarvis play and was voicing a belief that he *should* call Jarvis *Maitre*.

"Can all that stuff," said the young playwright, laughing. Academic in his prose, with a degree from the most catholic of American universities, he could afford in conversation to embrace the colloquial. Moreover, he was apply-

ing to that vernacular known along Broadway as "wise-cracking stuff" the rhythmic method of John Synge. If Synge could make music of Irish peasants' speech, Jarvis had far better material in picturesque Tenderloinese. However, he did not permit Letty so to speak and he frowned when he heard her say to Wilson that something was a "quince, a sour one." Immediately, she remembered: "An absolute failure, I should say," she amended hurriedly. She lisped slightly when her speech was hastened. She was the brilliantly beautiful young woman Mr. Rubblejay had followed; and she had refused more invitations to rich men's suppers than all the other company girls had a chance to accept.

Mr. Rubblejay watched her in a sort of dull, happy daze, as might a dog on finding a kind master. There took hold of him the same desperation to distinguish himself that had compelled him, as a boy, in full sight of a pig-tailed miss whose affection he craved, to lower himself into a very deep well.

"Waiter," he said, inspired, "do what the gentleman says, but hand the check to me *this* time.

"You're a good-fellow," said Mr. Wilson. "Mitt me, old kid." He held out "the mitt" and shook Rubblejay's heartily. "But you're with *me* to-night."

Rubblejay argued the point with all the solemnity of a college child just elected to a "frat." He was conscious of the brilliantly beautiful one's gaze. He had attracted her attention. For Wilson, realizing that obligations now lay sufficiently heavy upon all, yielded the point to "Papa." Rubblejay was not sure he liked that "Papa;" so he said: "Paul, call me *Dick*."

"*You* call me 'Dick,' too," he said, turning to Letty Lee, his heart thumping. Letty laughed. "All right, Dick," she said. "Here's to Dick, boys and girls."

But she sipped her champagne, only; for Jarvis let casual eyes rest on her glass; and she knew that if she exceeded his instructions, he would rise and start home, her following, to him, apparently a matter of no moment. Therefore, she

would have deserted a Delmonico banquet to beat him to the sidewalk. "Dick" was looking at her, too; *not* casually. She turned as soon as Jarvis looked elsewhere.

"Good Lord," she thought, with the unerring knowledge of alert women, "that funny old Dick is struck on me." Such is the savagery of youth that forty-five seems very ancient indeed, too ancient to possess any other than comic emotions. But she must not show her feelings too plainly and earn Jarvis' contempt for encouraging such "an *old* guy." "That's a woman!" Jarvis would continue as he had done many times before. "No matter *who* or *what*, so long as it's admiration."

To which, in the earlier stages of acquaintance, she would reply: "But I'm not like other girls," until the playwright pointed out that this remark alone proved absolutely the opposite. "You women all kid yourself you're different; whereas, if horses ran to form like women, I'd be a millionaire." This was no pose with the young man; his handling of women was instinctive. Otherwise, it is very doubtful if he cared sufficiently for them to have perfected himself in what, if studied, is as baffling as roulette.

Mr. Rubblejay thought joyously: "This is Bohemia. Here is the real thing." It was, but Mr. Rubblejay was not of it. He was as one who witnesses on a moving-picture reel all the intimacies of another person's home. "They like me for myself," thought Mr. Rubblejay. They neither liked nor disliked him. They were enjoying themselves and he was not interfering; so they hardly knew he was there. Had he been content with a position so inconspicuous—the only one to which he was entitled by a mentality actually much below the average of these young people—and preserved his incognito, he might have returned to frequent Santayana's, and found, in exchange for a meal or two, or an occasional round of drinks, a certain charming camaraderie. Bohemia tolerates such harmless ones and borrows their money, giving in re-

turn friendship and sprightly conversation, if such honorary members are content to play audience, to listen, approve, and never to intrude Philistine standards.

But few complete egotists with *Fortunatus* purses are content with parts so humble. Rubblejay was already in another spasm of *Haroun-al-Raschid*-ism. These people should be rewarded by finding that the erstwhile silent stranger was the great and good Rubblejay the First, who would not scorn them; nay, he would be their august patron. It did not occur to him that if the world rewarded his small efforts with a thousand times as much money as those of these brilliant young people, then either money must be a faulty standard or the American system insane.

It was a genuine evening, a warm, glowing disk against his dull gray, unimaginative life. Never were funnier stories told; never prettier girls to dance with; never dizzier rag-time "beaten out of the box" than that of young Louie Schanze, who later was to syncopate Wagner and win international fame; altogether it was a crowd to thrill the wistful dreams of the lonely amateur in letters or stage-struck aspirant. Like the scent of the roses, the memory of such a night pervades many days that follow; but at dawn the shard is shattered, the bottle broken. Chance—is the potter, the glass-blower.

Most of the party could afford to be poor, for their work was their pleasure. They welcomed such evenings when they came naturally, then forgot all about them. Not so Rubblejay, who, hating his work, had quitted it for pleasure. And, as this was his ideal, by virtue of his divine right as Rubblejay the First, *al Raschid* of Broadway, he must have much more of it. So, rising, he said: "Taxicabs, and we'll all go to Demarra's."

Had he been sensitive, he would have realized that his speech was like a gusty squall bursting upon a garden sweet with rue and roses, dissipating that scent, leaving only arid air. Demarra's! They knew it: a silly, bestial place, with entrances pretentiously guarded that ig-

norant sensation-seekers might believe its hidden delights only for the elect. Under the dim lanterns of its artificial pergola sat women to delight amateur Aubrey Beardsleys, dead whitish-yellow of skin, Egyptian of eyes, made up in imitation of pornographic Paris posters—hired dancers who pretended impromptus, and, for patrons, young collegians and respectable fools who imagined that they were seeing life.

"And afterwards, Chinatown?" asked Jarvis, coldly contemptuous.

"Sure," said Rubblejay; "to finish off a big evening."

Immediately his auditors divided into two classes: the first, despising him for ignorance; the second—"Taxicabs, eh?"—studying him for future profit. An almost imperceptible motion of Jarvis' eyelids told Letty she could not go. Her "good-by" reduced Rubblejay's satisfaction by three-quarters.

He urged and he pleaded. Burton Jarvis got his hat and coat, bade all a cheery "good-night," and sauntered forth leisurely, whistling, care-free. Letty caught him half-way down the block. She was bursting with desire to tell Jarvis "that funny old Dick" was "dead in love" with her; but he offered her no encouragement. So Rubblejay was quite forgotten by the next morning, when Jarvis called to accompany Letty on a quest for the sort of hats he was pleased to see her wear. Letty had arisen only a short time before and was breakfasting. She handed a cup of coffee to the young playwright. At the same moment, the telephone buzzed; Rubblejay from afar.

He had obtained her address from one of the other girls, was sending some roses, and would she lunch with him. Who was it? Why, Mr. Rubblejay: Richard K.; "Dick"—didn't she remember?

To Jarvis, drinking his coffee, she repeated the invitation, hand over the telephone. Jarvis smiled and lighted a cigarette. "Say, 'yes,'" he advised. Letty gazed at him in mournful dissatisfaction. Was this love—permitting her to lunch with another man? Jarvis raised his eyebrows and wanted to know why not?



W. MORGAN

Rubblejay wished Letty to pick out a ring to send to a certain young lady. Jarvis, who knew stones, silently guided her eyes to the most expensive ruby in the show case.

"I love you, Letty; and love is trust," said he, sipping. "I've got some work I can do and you've got an idle day ahead. Why not lunch expensively and ride through the Park in a motor?"—this, he knew, being an excellent way to make her decline. He was right. Letty shot him a scornful glance. "I can't go, Mr. Rubblejay," she said imperatively. Jarvis jumped and spilt his coffee. "Rubblejay," he gasped. He put a finger lipwards. "Wait a minute," said Letty into the telephone.

"Rubblejay," said Jarvis impressively, "Rubblejay—*Richard K.*?"

"Richard K. Rubblejay," she repeated, parrot-like.

"Such a stupid ass to be worth a hundred million," wondered Jarvis. "It only shows you, Puss, what I've always said about money. . . . See here: that changes things. He's wild about you: I saw by his face."

"Oh, he's struck on me, all right, all right, the old jay," said "Puss;" then into the telephone: "Yes, yes, just a minute, Mr. Rubblejay."

"Tell him all right then," said Jarvis in a tone that permitted of no contradiction. She obeyed. "He says he'll call at 12:30 with his car. A whole lot you care about me."

"Don't be a fool, Puss," he replied. "I'm going with you." While he smoked, he outlined a campaign against Rubblejay, grinning mischievously. Even if there had been no chance for gain, Jarvis would have welcomed a passage-at-arms with a Wall Street conqueror, if only to prove his contention that their money-making ability was not due so much to great brains as to little; "just like popular song-writers and best-selling authors," he said.

So, when Rubblejay was shown into the little apartment off Gramercy Park, he found Mr. Jarvis lounging there and Miss Lee looking distressed. "I already had an engagement with Mr. Jarvis," she said, unhappily. "Can't we take him along, Mr. Rubblejay?"

He said he would be delighted, but he did not look it. During the luncheon, at an appropriate moment, Jarvis commented upon the splendor of a ruby ring

that a woman, near by, was wearing. Letty, actress on a cue, put forward little bare paws devoid of ornamentation. "I wonder how it would look on me," she mused: "I never had a ring." Mr. Rubblejay coughed, choked, grew red in the face; Jarvis stared away. "If you'd permit me," said Rubblejay in a low tone. Letty looked shocked. "Oh, Mr. Rubblejay!"—"Dick," he amended.—"But I can't, I really can't call such a great man 'Dick,'" she murmured ingenuously. "It was different last night when I thought you were just one of the boys."

"That's all I want to be," said the great man, with ponderous levity, "just one of the boys."

"But—about the ring—I just couldn't think of it," Letty said. "No, indeed, oh, no!"

Somehow, between them, however, she and Jarvis managed to confine the conversation to jewels; so that Rubblejay had small chance to forget—not that he wished so to do. They drove to Grifony's, afterwards, and thinking himself very arch and sly, Rubblejay wished Letty to pick out a ring to send as a present to a certain young lady. "Oh, who is she?" asked Letty ingenuously. She could say such things, outrages to common-sense, with that lisp of hers. Jarvis, who knew stones, silently guided her eyes to the most expensive ruby in the show-case; but, as Rubblejay had it charged, he was not to realize what her ingenuousness had cost him until Grifony's semi-annual statement.

Jarvis then allowed his rival to see her home. He said "good-by" sulkily, did not offer to take Rubblejay's hand—both these rudenesses so very apparent that they delighted the older man.

"That Burt!" said Letty in a vexed tone as they drove southwards. "You know, just because I'm engaged to marry him, he thinks I ought never *look* at another man. And what makes it twice as hard: if he gets really angry with me, he wont give me the part in his new play he promised. And, oh! if you could realize what a chance to get out of the chorus means to a girl like me."

Thus Rubblejay was led to believe

that her engagement to Mr. Jarvis was largely due to the fact that he could assist her to higher things in the profession. Letty parroted some of Jarvis' pet remarks about art in acting, proving to her admirer that she was an intellectual little person, *with* a soul. None of your daughters of joy, but a serious young woman who had strong desires to do worthy things in worthy ways. She twanged this string so loudly that Rubblejay lost the courage that had prompted his purchase and feared the gift of the ring would be misunderstood; so that he was on the ultimate verge of departure, the ring still upon him, before she realized she had better be ingenuous again.

"Do tell me who's it for, please?"

Next to a caress, which he did not dare, a gift was the next best thing to relieve the overwhelming tenderness her fresh young face inspired. Without a word, he thrust into her little hands the delicate case of soft leather and, incontinently, fled, lest she should hurl it back. Instead, she kissed the ring a dozen times.

"Oh, you beautiful thing, you," she said passionately; and, presently, sobering, her eyes held deep calculation: "Thousands of dollars, as easy as that. Gee!"

III

Between the gnat's decision and the microbe's death there elapsed not even a second; but the fly maneuvered a minute; the spider spun half an hour; the clucking hen enjoyed a cross-country chase, even longer, while Reynard reconnoitered two whole nights for the hen; him, Casimir Smith, lost twice on false scents; so that his capture involved the better part of two hunting weeks; and Casimir himself was allowed the freedom of Wall Street nearly a month before Rubblejay got him.

Just as the details of these matters are dim, so are some of those in the case of the cycle's later swing. We observe Rubblejay smiling fatuously as he leaves the Gramercy Park apartment after the incident of his first gift. He fades again,

until like the Cheshire cat only his grin remains. When we have new light, it is upon an apartment in certain "mansions," Thames Embankment, City o' London; and no Rubblejay is there—only Burton Jarvis, the only American dramatist who has been performed at the new Repertory Theatre. He is asleep; although the knocking at his door finally proves too much even for a man who has survived the dress-rehearsal and *première* of his own costume-play. Jarvis arises and throws on a lounging robe.

It is the lift-man. "Sorry to disturb you, sir; but this lady insisted you would not mind—" Letty had been in Burton's arms since the "Sorry."

"I couldn't stand it, Burt," said Letty penitently, when the door closed. "It was too awful; you away and that awful person hounding me night and day. I even got to hate his presents; although now I'm rid of him I don't hate them so much. In fact, I love them."

She opened her jewel-box and poured forth its contents. There were a necklace, a heart the size of a butter-plate, a horse shoe that would have shod a Shetland, all of diamonds; two huge *cabocons*; a sapphire and an emerald; and a Marquise-edged with these latter, cut square, had for its double-isosceles triangle a pure white Brazilian.

"Four thousand just for that one alone. Altogether,"—she considered, wrinkling her pretty brows—"thirty thousand, at least," she said triumphantly. "And he never even got the chance to kiss me. 'That's no good,' I always told him; 'no sense to that until you *make* me care for you.'"

"These strong men always believe they can make women care," murmured Jarvis. "As well try to move a mountain as a woman who doesn't love you of her own free will."

She snapped a bundle of letters from the gold-fitted portmanteau she carried, and continued: "As soon as you sailed he began doing all that." She waved at the jewels. "And this. Read that note!" "Why, what a scoundrel," remarked Jarvis with an air of surprise; "also what a fool." She peeped. "Oh, that's the one



"I could not stand it, Burt," said Letty penitently.

where he says he'll make his wife get a divorce. Isn't he a rat? He told me if she didn't divorce him, he could easily pay people to swear to things that would make everything easy for us. Him and me! Can you imagine it? Do you wonder I beat it away from him?"

"You could have had millions," said Jarvis, thoughtfully.

She cocked her head, bird-like, peeping up with one eye: "I couldn't have you," she answered. He kissed her with real warmth and took her hand. "We've been in love a year, haven't we?" he said. "Then you were a flip little chorus-girl, your empty little head swelled with fools' flattery. Now you turn down a millionaire because he bores you. Let's get married, Puss? 'Pomona' looks like a hit."

As she had urged his favorable consideration of this matter many thousand times, she now wept for joy. He, sincerely touched, caressed her with a fervor foreign to his nature. Such men succeed with women because, having for continual company many hundreds of mental heroines, they understand that one woman is very like another, given that she be pretty, adaptable and loves greatly. And Burton Jarvis knew so much about human nature that he could write nothing but comedy. So he thought it best to settle his woman question for all time.

With a certain relief, therefore, he went to St. George's and was united in bonds of holy matrimony with Petra Tschudy, which happened to be Letty's name before she had a stage christening. Both of them had completely forgotten Richard K. Rubblejay.

IV

But Rubblejay had forgotten neither of them and was crossing at that minute, bribery having finally opened the lips of the hall-boy who had put Letty's trunks on the taxicab to the steamer. He found no trace of her at any London hotels, but knew the Jarvis address since he had once mailed a letter for her. To it, then, doggedly in the dusk of London he made his way. As he approached, Letty was sending her newly-engaged

maid down to the Embankment, where, in a fog that was turning to cold drizzle, hundreds of shivering men and women stood lined-up waiting their chance at that wedge of bread and cup of coffee, both very thick, nightly distributed there, to those who sleep in penny dosses or nowhere at all. The maid's apron was full of copper pennies, which pennies represented a brooch Letty had never liked. "Ugly thing," she said. "And I just can't stand seeing those poor people night after night and not doing *something*."

Privately, Jarvis decided he had done well in marrying her. He confessed to a similar inability to endure the sight of so much suffering without a personal attempt at mitigation, told how he had gone along the line asking many if they had places to sleep. As none had answered "yes," his change had not lasted long.

The desk-telephone rang, and Mr. Rubblejay was announced.

"Let me handle him, Burt," Letty urged tremulously; "I'll get him away." She did not dare express fears for Burt's safety lest he remain. As it was, he found the incident only a vexing trifle, saying: "Bother, who'd have thought he'd turn up," and was willing enough to shift the task of opening the millionaire's eyes. Both had forgotten Rubblejay had a heart to break; to them he had only a fortune to spend.

Vanished from Letty, the sweet womanliness that had prompted the sale of the brooch; vanished also the kittenish purring of her relations with Jarvis. She was only angered at an alien's intrusion.

She had but too willingly judged the millionaire's worth by his own standard of money; now she wished him to go—and go quickly; to accomplish which, she tried telling Rubblejay that she had found love for him impossible, and so had fled.

"To Jarvis," he thundered. "To him—a little whipper-snapper whelp—when I offered you an honest man's name: a name that means something in America, in the world...."

"You know you're married," she said, fretfully. "Please go."

"I told you I'd fix that. My wife's nothing to me. Never was." He spoke the truth. This was his first genuine emotion. He had sacrificed to "getting on," to his wife's dowry, even the chance for romance. In days past, his business had tired him too thoroughly to leave fuel sufficient to feed the fire of a passion. But he had been idle a year now; and for three months of it his business had been Letty. His wife—that drab woman—seemed an unreasonable obstacle. This child could be taught to love him. He did not doubt Letty cared *something* for him; his belief was that she had fled because she saw in him no ultimate marital chance. He redoubled in speech the assurance he had already written.

"I tell you, I've got the people ready to swear against her—her own maid, her chauffeur, her butler."

Jarvis, in the next room, had divided his time between listening and watching Letty's *largesse* being distributed to those shivering miseries down on the Embankment. The connection between such derelicts and Rubblejay, plainly effect and cause, had caused him to burn with hatred at the sound of the millionaire's voice. Actually, he desired to hurt the fellow: to make Rubblejay pay not only his own share, but those of all responsible with him for so much unnecessary misery. The rich man's final treachery against his wife was the flame that hardened Jarvis' heart like steel. He stepped out.

"That is going to cost you just one hundred thousand dollars," he said coldly. He held up his hand for silence. "You wrote out all the details of that pretty little scheme. Letty gave me the letters."

"Good," said Letty, clapping her hands. "It serves him right."

Rubblejay stared at her in dull misery, only half-understanding. But she, remembering the annoyance he had been to her, had become suddenly vengeful, too. "People like you ought to be made to suffer," she said. "If you knew how I hate you." She ran to Jarvis for protection, suddenly realizing how groundless were her fears for his safety; he so

strong, Rubblejay so weak. "Yes, hate you. I was in love with Burt when I met you. We fixed it up that day to make you buy that first ring—he's so smart, and you're such a fool. Care for *you*? You're like a snake to me. If you *touched* me, I'd scream."

Like some prisoner of the Inquisition, searching for pity, the eyes of the torturer racking him, Rubblejay was unable to remove his dull gaze. Yet, actually, her arms were about Jarvis, her lips against his cheek, her mouth full of words of affection for him, hatred for her benefactor. Finally, he realized. "Played! played for a sucker!" The words came back as he remembered an experience at show-girl hands of some other Wall Street man. How he had laughed, just as thousands would find only laughter for him, even when his whole world had tumbled down and crushed him. There was no man under the *débris*: only a tortured soul, a soul that had craved life and was dying unborn. He could not speak.

Jarvis was sorry. He was a sensitive man: he felt, although no one could quite understand, how terrible was this man's loss; he realized that Rubblejay's real life had begun that night in Santayana's and that he had lived, since, in gorgeous purple tents of wine, woman, and song. And now the tents were burned, and he had no place of refuge. The purposelessness of his life had been manifest before: to return to such inertia was impossible now. Having been moved to understand dimly other things, torpidity was now unbearable, unbelievable. And there was only that.

These things, somehow, Jarvis knew. He sought to make it easier by showing Rubblejay that when he chose great wealth out of all life has to offer, he could expect to gain nothing else; the price others paid to gratify his ambition, had been too great. Jarvis threw up the blinds.

"Look at those starving men down there," he said. "There are thousands like them, maybe millions, because you and your kind have your own share of money and theirs, too. That is our fear, the fear of all poor people—to be like

them. That is what we face from birth, people like Letty and I.

"How can you expect us to have any friendship for you unreasonably rich men, who take our shares and threaten us with *that!* Friends? Impossible. You fight us down on the Street, in Capel Court, in the Bourse. When we get the chance, when you come into *our world*, we are just as unscrupulous in fighting you. You *are* unscrupulous; otherwise you wouldn't dare have unnecessary millions while those poor devils starve down there.

"So we don't want your friendship. We only want your money: our money and their money." He pointed again. "You pay the penalty, Rubblejay. You can't *buy* anything worth while; you've got to *be* it. I'm sorry you've found that out too late.

"And because I'm sorry, I'm a fool. There are your letters. Good-night."

But it was useless. Rubblejay could not even understand, that, in the one moment he had been pitifully human, relying on neither wealth nor power, Jarvis had been helpless against him. He refused the reason, only saw the result; so Jarvis strode across the room, stuffed the letters into Rubblejay's pocket, and almost pushed him to the door: cupidity must not stir again.

V

It was years before the scene recreated itself and gave a reason for that relief. Years? To be exact, seven, and Jarvis stood with Letty in Covent Garden, inhaling at sunrise the scent of a thousand flowers, borne to them on the dewy breeze of dawn. They had remained awake for the newspapers, which, fresh and damp, Letty now crushed in her arms. Each and every one had said the play produced "last night" was Jarvis in apogee: that it proved him no longer an American, merely, but an universal. Letty's work in a secondary rôle had also been accorded consideration.

"Oh, Burt!" she murmured. He awoke, suddenly, from reverie:

"And if we'd got that money from

Rubblejay, we might be *wasters* to-day," he said, taking her hand. "Might have started on a vacation that wouldn't have ended until the money did; and then out of the habit of work. As it is—poor old Rubblejay! I wonder how long it took him to get over it."

It is hard to answer the playwright's question. The misfortunes that grew out of Letty's affair played a part too large to forget, even had Rubblejay so desired; for, wild with disappointment, he had mislaid the bundle of letters Jarvis gave him and, somehow, by servants' treachery or sheer ill luck, they fell into his wife's hands. Whereupon she had forced a divorce and the payment of her dower-right, one-third of his entire fortune; he had alienated her affections long since; she too had endured him only because she must.

So, homeless, in sheer desperation, he went back to business again. But, this time, *he* was the speculator, although several times he was misled into thinking he was "on the inside," just as, a few years back, he had misled others. A poor man, then, as he, to whom money was life, counted wealth, the fear beset him that he was no longer important; only by dissipation could the dread be banished; otherwise it persisted and with it would come the conviction that he was an ignorant old man whom anybody could trick, anyone delude, for whom no one cared a jot. His drinking increased in proportion to his loneliness, until, at the time Letty and Burt stood successful in Covent Garden, his relatives, alarmed at the continual shrinking of their inheritance, had him carted off, one gray morning, to a sanitarium, where, denied the power to deceive himself, he died.

—*I wonder if, somewhere, there is not lurking the microbe which, some day, will alight on Letty Lee? For is not the cycle interminable? Is it not the only perpetual motion this earth has yet achieved: this war that wages forever, for which no one knows the cause, yet to end which is to end All-Life?*

I wonder.



The FAIR FIGHT

By Thomas Gray Fessenden

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT T. REYNARD

THE tapper on the wall began its staccato rattle. Scanlon pulled down his feet from the desk top, seized a pencil, mechanically noted the time and recorded the alarm, which was from a box in a distant district. Then he tilted back his chair, put his feet on the blotter once more and resumed his fixed staring at the polished sheathing of the ceiling.

His heavy brows were puckered in a frown; the muscles at the corners of his mouth were set rigidly; his fireman's cap was pushed so far back on his red head that the visor stuck up almost perpendicularly from the middle of his scalp. One glance at him as he sat there

at the desk beneath the tapper would have told anyone who knew him that the usually light-hearted and good-natured Mike Scanlon had a most beautiful grouch of some sort.

In their stalls at the rear of the room the two big bays of "Chemical No. 10" munched and champed, munched and champed, monotonously; and upstairs Scanlon could hear the quarreling voices of Watts and Sheehan in some altercation over one of their eternal games of coon-can.

Then a door above stairs opened; footsteps crossed a bare floor. Scanlon heard a voice chaffing the two arguing men. It was the voice of Dan Kiley, the

newly-made lieutenant, now in command of Chemical No. 10—Dan Kiley, with whom Scanlon had grown up, and played and fought, with whom he had come in his probation days to Chemical No. 10, with whom he had served many years in the same company.

And now Dan Kiley was a lieutenant—Scanlon's commanding officer. Kiley could order him about as he saw fit, and Scanlon would meekly have to obey. Not that he cared about that in itself, for Dan Kiley was not the man to abuse his authority in any way; but it would make a difference in Honora Riordan's attitude to the pair. Scanlon realized that, the day the order announcing Kiley's appointment to a commission was read.

It had been touch and go with them as far as Honora was concerned—a rare rivalry with neither man having any seeming advantage over the other: Honora's smiles and favors were for them both impartially. But now Kiley was a lieutenant and in charge of Chemical Number Ten. Scanlon poked at the blotter on the desk with his heel and scowled viciously at that sheathed ceiling.

Upstairs, Kiley's big voice boomed out in a good-natured laugh; he said: "Now don't put anything like that up to me, Sheehan. You settle your own card scraps. I don't know anything about coon-can, anyway. You two wouldn't be happy if you weren't having some kind of an argument—over coon-can or something else. So go to it!"

Then Scanlon heard the lieutenant's steps crossing the floor again. They came to the top of the stairs; they began to descend. There was a certain reluctant, hesitating quality in those footsteps, as if Kiley were forcing himself to something he would much prefer to shirk. Scanlon, listening intently, stiffened.

He took down his feet from the desk, straightened his cap and opened the little record-book on the desk before him. When Kiley came down the stairs into the engine-room, Scanlon was apparently engrossed in the scrawled records of the day's alarms.

He did not look up when Kiley came

over to the desk. He did not lift his eyes, even when he knew Kiley was standing beside him. Never before in the history of the department had a record-book proved so fascinating to a man doing his trick at the tapper-desk.

Finally Kiley spoke. It was just one word, uttered almost pleadingly:

"Mike," said Kiley.

Scanlon looked up. His frown was quite as pronounced; also those ridges along his jowls and at the corners of his mouth stood out still more tautly.

"I didn't deserve this lieutenantancy any more'n you did, Mike," said Kiley, speaking with evident difficulty. "You are just as good a man and you've done just as much as I have to get it. It just happened they gave it to me."

"Aw, you've earned it, all right," said Scanlon.

"I don't want it to make any difference to us," said Kiley, fooling with a buckle on his suspenders—he was coatless and the polished buckles of those suspenders stood out sharply against the dark blue of his flannel shirt.

Scanlon said nothing.

"Not in anything," Kiley pursued. "Now, about Honora—I want it to be just the same—"

"Oh, sure. Sure it'll be the same," grunted Scanlon with a sarcasm that made the Lieutenant wince.

He rested his two hands on the desk edge and leaned towards Scanlon.

"Let the best man win there," he said rather sharply. "I'm not going to use any advantage this new job might give me. I want you to understand that, Mike. That's what I'm trying to tell you."

"That's all right," said Scanlon, looking gloomily out at a heavily loaded dray which was bumping past the fire-house.

"It's always been a fair fight between us, and it's going to be a fair fight now just the same," Kiley declared.

Scanlon turned quickly, so quickly that his head seemed jerked about at right angles to peer sharply over his shoulder at the man standing beside him. His blue eyes shot out momentary sparks of fire at his superior.

"Well now see that it is," he snapped.

Kiley looked at him steadily. His own eyes narrowed. A touch of angry red flashed up into either cheek.

"I will see to it, Mike," he asserted with emphasis, as he turned on his heel and moved towards the stairs.

Scanlon heard him ascend, heard him go to his own room and bang the door behind him. After that there was silence in the house save for the steady munch and champ

of the two horses in their stalls and the now lowered voices of Sheehan and Watts at their coon-can.

Scanlon seized the pencil and recorded another alarm from an outlying district as it came in. Then he tapped moodily on the desk with the end of the pencil. Presently he began to draw queer geometrical designs on the blotter. A whiff from the pipe beside him did not prove very soothing.

"Yah, I got a fat show now, aint I?" he complained to himself. "A fine, fat show I got with Honora Riordan, and him a lieutenant! A fair fight still, says he. Bah! He'd better can that bunk!"

At last Sheehan came down to take the trick at the desk. Scanlon poked upstairs. The Lieutenant's door was still shut. He could hear some one pacing up and down behind it. From the dingy lounging-room at the head of the stairs Watts, puffing at his pipe by the little card table, called to him:

"Play you a little coon-can, Mike!"

"Darn your coon-can! Play solitaire," Scanlon snapped. He went into the bunk-room and sat down on the edge of his bed.

The morning sunshine was streaming in through the windows. He flopped over



"Well, now, see that it is," he snapped.

on the bed, comfortably stretched at full length with his two hands under his head, and lay there, lost in unpleasant musings. His only solace was the pat of the Lieutenant's feet, as behind that closed door he paced the narrow confines of his private quarters.

Box 256 is a dreaded one. It is in the district of fire-trap tenements, with here and there an old residence converted to business purposes. It is near the water front—a district of narrow, over-populated, swarming streets.

Lying there on the bed, Mike Scanlon heard 256 come in on the tapper, heard Sheehan's quite superfluous call of "256!" and even as the house became filled with the orderly confusion that the sounding of a box on which they "rolled" always brought, he was down the pole and on the rear step of the chemical engine.

Out they swung, the gong whirring and Watts giving the two big bays their heads.

Kiley called: "Make time, Bill!" They bumped and jolted across the car-tracks and went tearing down a side-street.

At Box 256 a bare-headed, shirt-

sleeved man, his face dripping with perspiration, made a trumpet of his hands as they came galloping up, Bill Watts pulling down the team to catch the bare-headed man's directions.

"It's in 723," he roared. "In the cellar!"

They could see the purls of smoke wreathing out the basement windows of Number 723 as Watts let out the team once more.

723 was one of the converted residences. It was occupied, if one were to believe the signs which covered its front, by the Belmont Construction Company.

In a trice the men of Number 10 had unlimbered in front of it, run out a line, pushed open the basement door and rushed into the stifling, smoke-filled place. Lurid flashes shot through the blinding pall of smoke; there was an ominous crackling, a puff of scorching heat. A pile of inflammable waste was blazing up merrily; a wooden partition was a mass of twisting, writhing red; the floor joists above their heads were breaking into flame, one after another.

"Bad business!" Kiley grunted. "Get into it! We gotta hold it till '56' gets here and gets a line on it. We gotta hold it, fellers—you hear? The partition first. Put your stream on that! The rubbish pile there is about burnt out, anyway!"

With helmets reversed and pulled low over their faces the men sent a stream against the roaring partition. It hissed and sputtered and sent out hot steam still further to add to the unlivableness of the place.

"Higher, Sheehan!" the Lieutenant directed. "Get a little nearer! Here, gimme that nozzle. We gotta work smart to hold this mess till '56' gets here!"

"Straighten her out there

at the door, Watts! That's the stuff! Come on now. Let's hold her right where she is!"

He pulled the nozzle nearer to the fire until his rubber coat began to blister and smoke and give out unholy smells. All the time his ear was alert for the clang of any arriving apparatus in the street outside.

Then into the cellar came a portly, puffing, choking figure.

"For God's sake, boys," it quavered, "get outa here—outa here quick! They's four boxes of dynamite in that little closet right by the partition. Hike! It'll be goin' off any minute now!"

Kiley turned with a roar.

"Get outa here, all of you!" he bel-lowed.

Sheehan and Watts needed no second invitation. Following the man who had warned them, and who was now tum-



He went into the bunk-room and sat down on the edge of his bed.

bling wildly through the basement door, they went panic-stricken out of the smoke-filled trap. Kiley, turning, saw Scanlon making straight for that closet, close to the burning partition.

"You too!" he ordered sharply.

"Aw, say now—" Scanlon demurred, wheezingly.

"Out! Get out! You hear what I say!" roared Kiley, and jumped at Scanlon, shoving him back with the flat of his hands.

Then, dropping the nozzle, he darted straight at that little wooden closet.

The heat scorched away his eyebrows and such of his hair as was below his helmet rim; it blistered his face; it even singed off his eye-lashes; it made him sick and faint and giddy; but he reached the door. One blow of his heavy boot-heel just above the lock, and it swung inward. Kiley, in the flickering light of the flames, saw four small boxes on the floor in one corner. He gathered them up, tucked them beneath his rubber coat, staggered out and found the street door.

"56" had just come up and had her hose coupled to the near-by hydrant. The hum of her pumps was music to Kiley's ears.

"All right! Come on in, now!" he shouted hoarsely to Sheehan and Watts across the street.

He noticed, with a certain satisfied smile, that Scanlon had not left the basement. He stood inside, near the door, just where Kiley had pushed him back.

"56's" hose-men came swarming in after them. They made short work of the fire with their more powerful stream.

Chemical No. 10 went bumping back to its house. Kiley was beside Scanlon on the back step. Scanlon refused to look at the Lieutenant. He was muttering unintelligibly to himself under his breath all the way back.

Once at the house, Kiley went upstairs while the three men began to clean the tanks and polish up generally. Scanlon did not speak to the other two. He plied his handful of cotton waste, sullenly. Now and then he stalked to the

door and spat disgustedly over the guard-chain.

He heard the door of the Lieutenant's room close; and after it the ring of the Lieutenant's telephone. Kiley always roared full-lunged when he talked over the 'phone. Scanlon could plainly hear his voice now:

"Say, gimme 3500, South!" Scanlon heard the Lieutenant's stentorian tones. And a moment later:

"Hello! This the *Ledger* office?—Mr. Clarkson there?—Yes, if you'll kindly put him on the wire.—Hello, this you, Jim?—Say, I've got a nice little story for you; yep, one of those human interest things, as you call 'em.—Yep, send a man up to the house. I'll give it to him.—All right. So long."

Scanlon bit his lips. This was fighting fair, wasn't it? Kiley had driven him out of that basement—driven him out when he was just as able and just as willing as Kiley to take out that dynamite! It was plain to see, why Kiley had done it. If there were any grandstand stunts, Kiley was going to hog them, and, what was more, he was going to advertise them broadcast. Maybe this was his idea of fair fighting! Scanlon kicked viciously at the surprised and startled black cat, Chemical No. 10's mascot, which at that inauspicious moment saw fit to rub against his legs.

He went upstairs and lost himself in bitter musings. And the worst of it all, he had to admit finally to himself, was not that he was so much disappointed in losing out with Honora Riordon, as he was hurt and shocked and cut at the means Kiley would use to attain his own ends. He never would have believed it of Dan Kiley. He would have fought to the finish with any man who might have even suggested such a thing of Kiley.

He heard the man from the *Ledger* come in and go to Kiley's room; he heard the two talking behind the closed door, but the voices were not intelligible. He heard the man as he was leaving, say: "Sure, Lieutenant. It'll be in the early evening editions. And 'played up,' too!"

Scanlon felt sick and nauseated, and then came a blind rage.



"Bad business," Kiley grunted.

At four that afternoon he was summoned to the telephone down-stairs. It was Honora's voice that spoke to him as he called through the transmitter.

"Oh, it was splendid, Mike! I might have known you'd do something like that when the chance came. I might have known it!"

"Huh? Done what?" he growled, mystified.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Modesty! Of course, you'll say it was nothing at all. I refer to what you did this morning. To-mor-

row is your day off, isn't it? Well, be sure to come up. I want to see how it changes you to become a spot-light character."

"What are you talking about?" he demanded.

"What you did this morning," said she, patiently.

"And what was that?"

"Oh, look in the afternoon papers," said she. "But be sure and come up here to-morrow. Good-by!"

Scanlon stepped to the side-walk and whistled for the news-boy on the next corner. He had to look no farther than the front page. There it was—a glowing account of how Mike Scanlon of Chemical No. 10 had taken four boxes of dynamite from a burning basement that morning.

The door of the Lieutenant's room was closed. Scanlon was supposed to rap under such circumstances, but he didn't. He fairly burst it open. Kiley sat filling out a report blank for the fire that

morning. Scanlon pounced upon him, all but upsetting him. He caught Kiley's hand and seemed trying to wring it from the arm.

"Darn you!" he cried, while something glistening slipped down the side of his nose. "Darn you, Dan Kiley! I never thought you'd fight fair. I knew you wouldn't! But I can fight just as mean as you can, and it's goin' to be known right off who really *did* risk his worthless old carcass to take them boxes of dynamite out!"



The Mocker

By
M—— T—— T——

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK W. RAYMOND

THIS is not a moral treatise. It is the story of a personal experience. One of those experiences that, I think, should be told. Murder will out! However, this is not a murder story.

Events previous to my marriage have really no bearing on the subject. I was in newspaper work at the time I met the man who later became my husband. I was really only a "cub," for it had been only a year before that a seemingly unending chain of adversities swept home and parents from me and threw me on my own resources. On account of a faculty for seeing all sorts of things—that other people saw but took as a matter of course—and chronicling them in a rather unusual and laughable manner, I had, however, arrived at the eminence where, occasionally, the powers that were signed my name to the copy I turned out. And twice magazines had accepted contributions. The articles they took were tales of true happenings, founded on real incidents, for the queer part about me is and always has been that I cannot write out and out fiction. I must have at least a bowing acquaintance with that about which I write.

It was one of these magazine stories that attracted the attention of Dr. Browning to me. He recognized the incident. It had to do with what had been a case of his that had attained some notoriety in the newspapers. He wrote me a letter, asking for an interview. I called

at his office. And so we met—for the first time. After that, meetings became a habit and finally, having decided that we were necessary to each other, we came to the conclusion that marriage was the logical remedy for the condition. We were, therefore, married. Scanty meals, insufficient clothing and kindred worries became, then, things of the past to me, for my husband was a successful surgeon and generous to a degree.

It is a common supposition that anyone who has anything to do with newspapers drinks. There is, of course, much excuse for the idea. The strenuous, ideal-shattering life does make one tend toward those things which will produce brain relaxation. But I had not been in the work long enough to reach the stage where I had ceased to believe in the God of my fathers and the children of men. I suffered far more from fatigue than depression, for I worked hard. But a good cup of coffee furnished all the stimulant I ever thought of or needed. Besides, even the smell of liquor was distasteful to me. Therefore, lacking cause for using it, I did not seek the effect.

My husband was a total abstainer. In his work he needed a steady hand and a clear brain. Some surgeons, they say, never go in to an operation without first having taken a stiff drink. Be that as it may, I'd rather put my life in the hands of the man who doesn't rely on a "bracer." My husband was such an one,

and I was proud of his stand on the subject. As I abominated the stuff myself, we hardly even discussed our ideas regarding it. We kept all sorts of liquor in the house for such of our friends as wished it, but joined them only in grape juice mixtures and the like.

When we had come back from our honeymoon and settled down to life together, I used my leisure hours for writing. My only other work was practicing the art of home-making. Two competent maids attended to the housekeeping. They had been with Jim's mother for years and she had sent them to me. Supervision was, therefore, my only duty in this line, and I tried to be wise and prudent. I loved making home attractive, planning dainty meals and seeing that my husband's wardrobe was always in perfect condition. Though he was particular, as doctors usually are, regarding cleanliness and order, I know that I pleased and satisfied him during those first two years of our married life. And how proud he was when I had stories accepted! You should have heard him brag.

There came a time when, for some reason or other, my brain refused to work properly. This, of course, happened just at a time when I had a splendid idea which I knew would make a successful story could I only work it out. But I couldn't! I know now that there was nothing more interesting the matter with me than indigestion—I ate so much candy. However, it never occurred to me then. Jim was fearfully busy, so I said nothing to him, and he, preoccupied and worried, failed to notice.

One day Ethel Carson, wife of a doctor friend of Jim's, dropped in for tea. She was a gay, attractive girl, fond of clothes and good times. She was rather inclined toward un-morality, if there is such a thing, but she was, nevertheless, kind-hearted and good company. And newspaper work had taught me leniency.

"You look woefully under the weather, Maud," she said that afternoon. "What's the matter?" I told her of my grogginess. She nodded wisely.

"My dear," she said, "I get those fits

every once in a while. I take a high-ball for 'em." I laughed and shook my head.

"That's a case where the cure would be worse than the disease," I said. "I couldn't drink a high-ball to save me!"

"Well," Ethel admitted, "I don't care for the *taste* of whiskey, myself—but *oh, the effect!* Come on, Maud, let me mix you a little one. Just for fun. I dare you!"

I protested it would make me sick, but finally, to please her, I gave in. As the nasty stuff went down my throat I shuddered and choked; but I got it down and a pleasant warmth and exhilaration stole over me. Suddenly I jumped up, handed Ethel her gloves and pushed her toward the door.

"Go home," I said. "Right away! I've got to write! My story is right at my finger-tips. Go on home!"

She left, laughing, and I flew to the typewriter. I wrote feverishly. In two hours I had finished what I had been fussing over for weeks. Not even waiting to copy the story, I stuck it in an envelope and mailed it before dinner. In a week's time I had received the biggest check that had ever come my way, and, in addition to it, a warm letter of commendation from the editor of the magazine, asking for more of "the same kind of live stuff."

As I stood holding the check and letter, I whispered to myself:

"After this—when I can't think—I'll know what to do!"

That was the start. Before long, I had grown dependent on "bracers." If I had a disagreeable duty to perform, I took "a little one." If I couldn't think—"just a sip of something or other, to set my brain working." If chilly, a toddy to warm me up. To put it concisely, I "tipped." Not nearly so much as did Ethel and the rest—but enough!

Jim never suspected it. Knowing how I hated liquor, it did not occur to him that I would take it for any reason. His first knowledge of the fact came one night when some people had dropped in for cards. We served drinks, of course. As I hesitated, not knowing whether to take anything with Jim around, or not,



"I caught Jim's eyes upon me. The look of pain and surprise in them!"

Dan Carson whispered in my ear: "Poor little girl! Such an ogre for a husband!"

"Ogre?" I flashed him a defiant smile.

"Mix me a ginger ale high-ball, Jim, please," I said to my husband.

Now this husband of mine, while not what is known as a sport, was nevertheless, a good fellow. And a gentleman. He knew they were all watching us and neither by word or look would he betray surprise or reluctance. He fixed my high-ball, gave it to me with some laughing remark or other, and then clinked his glass with mine.

That night I only had two drinks, but, somehow or other, they affected me terribly. I was gay to excess—rowdyish. Once when everybody was rocking with laughter at something audacious I had said or done, I caught Jim's eyes upon me. The look of pain and surprise in them! But I simply couldn't stop. I was wound up.

When finally they were gone, I slid up to him.

"Love me!" I teased. He put his two hands on my shoulders. His steady eyes held my burning ones.

"No," he said, "I don't want to. I don't like you. You're not my girl to-night. I'm an old-fashioned man, I guess. But I can't relish the odor of whiskey on my wife's breath."

I drew back, peering at him impishly. Thoughts of Dan, handsome, reckless, openly admiring, flashed across my mind. I laughed. Jim started. It must have been a hard little laugh.

"Fogy!" I jeered. "Old Sobersides!"

He turned away, disgust in his face. "Go to bed, Maud," he said shortly. "And wake up—sober—if you please."

I flaunted away to the guest room. I had just finished my preparations for the night when Jim came to the door. His face was white.

"Turn out that light and come out of here!" he ordered in a low voice. "I won't have any such nonsense! What's more, I've emptied out all that vile stuff, and don't you dare have any of it in the house again! Do you hear?"

"You emptied it out!" I exclaimed angrily. "Well, you had no right to. It's

a queer thing if we can't show our friends as good a time when they come here as they're accustomed to having other places. I'll buy some more with my own money that I earn myself—so there! Just because you're a silly old surgeon is no reason why your wife must serve malted milk tablets and lithia water and swallow them herself."

In spite of himself he smiled. I was so utterly absurd. But he only said:

"Hop into bed, honey, and go to sleep. We'll talk to-morrow."

"We won't," I muttered. "I'll never speak to you again." Then I fell asleep.

I awoke clear-headed and much ashamed of myself. Jim and I had a long talk that day and I agreed willingly—for I felt sick—not to serve liquor in our home again. Beer, perhaps, but nothing more. We parted tenderly. After he had gone, nausea and I had a severe little session which left me as certain as Jim seemed to be, that drink was a very good thing to let alone.

Late that afternoon the telephone rang. It was Dan Carson.

"Ethel has a headache, but she told me I must call you up and tell you what a good time we had at your party. You know how *willingly* I fulfill the commission. How are you?"

I replied that I had been sick. Dan laughed.

"Kid!" he teased. "Poor little country maiden! Not used to the gay life, are you? 'Never again!'—eh? Listen—got any absinthe in the house?" I replied that I had not.

"All right," Dan said. "As consulting physician I shall send you out something guaranteed to cure. And you must take it. I'll mix it so you won't have a thing to do but to drink it." I shuddered.

"No, don't," I begged. "I couldn't touch a thing!"

"I'll send it"—cheerfully. "And you be a nice girl and mind your Uncle Dan. You'll feel like new. By-by."

He sent it. I conquered my loathing and drank it down. I began to feel better. Soon I was quite myself, a slightly exhilarated and interestingly retrospective self, but no longer sick, no longer "blue." I made up my mind never again

to be without this wonderful remedy—"the hair of the dog that bit me," Dan Carson called it.

The little incident of the absinthe formed the foundation of an understanding between Dr. Carson and myself. As his wife's best friend, I was often at their home. He had his office there and so we saw much of each other. He called me "little sister" and I called him "brother," and, trying to make myself believe that it was only as a brother I thought of him, I got into the habit of going to him for advice, consolation in my "blue" moods, etc.

Ethel? Oh, Ethel never gave it a thought. Anyhow, she had a "brother" of her own, who sent her flowers and took her to parties when Dan was busy on a case or out of town—or taking me somewhere. For it soon came to be that I depended on him for escort when Jim was unable to take me places. I never spent an evening at home alone.

Some men, it seems, can drink steadily, every day, without facing havoc. I don't think any woman can. The delicate feminine mechanism rebels. Children, unconceived, cry out against it. No woman who has ever had pure ideals, who has loved and admired her mother, who has been the wife of a good man, can succumb to any vice without mental torture unspeakable. Though she may argue that black is white and bring proof that black is, indeed, white, there is never a moment when she does not *know* that black is black, and hate herself for the weakness that permits her to argue that regarding which there can be no real argument. She finds herself whirling blindly about in a whirlpool that she has herself created—far more difficult to escape from than had she fallen unaware into a real maelstrom.

It was not long before I was telling myself that I was unhappily married. Dan had many times frankly admitted that Ethel and he were unsuited to each other; and Ethel, in moments of dizzy confidence, had told me the same thing. We, Dan and I, gradually developed what is known, I believe, as the *grande passion*, for each other. We took to meeting clandestinely. In out-of-the-way

cafés, we sat for hours, looking into each other's eyes across drinks, discussing ourselves, the Fate which kept us apart and had ordained that, meant for each other though we were, we could never be anything but friends, clasping hands across the gulf. Sickening, isn't it? But you've seen countless couples doing the same thing—and you've wondered *when* the men ever worked!

My writing became a thing of the past. My mind and heart had grown too muggy with wrong thinking to bring anything clean-cut into being. I sent a few half-hearted attempts to the editor who had seemed so interested, but they came back with mere printed slips of rejection enclosed.

"It's no use," I said resignedly as I tore up the stories. "If I were married to Dan and my mind were at ease—I could write. But when I'm upset like this, there's no use trying!"

I no longer devoted hours to my home. I had competent help, so—what was the use? My walks began to tire me—my muscles were becoming so flabby—so I gave them up. What was the use, anyhow, in working to get red cheeks when rouge was cheap—or bright eyes, when a little belladonna would produce the same effect?

These things I had learned at the afternoon bridge parties where, over cocktails, the women tell each other all the evil that they know and egg each other on to new deviltries. Here we discussed sex problems and repudiated motherhood. "Brats," we called the children we would not have, and tales of the deceiving and buncoing of husbands were related to the great hilarity of all present.

It does not seem to me that the hard-faced woman of those parties could have been the fresh-cheeked, clear-eyed girl, pulsing with life and tenderness, filled to the brim with good old-fashioned ideas and ideals who, only three short years before, had taken the vows of matrimony with her heart upon her lips!

Between my husband and myself had come a wall of restraint. Jim had not understood me for some time; but, owing to my extreme cunning and the cun-



I slid up to him. "Love me," I teased.

ning of the friends (?) who upheld me, he had no idea of what was going on. And he was too busy to spend much time puzzling. But I know he did a lot of thinking, for he tried to persuade me to go to a sanitarium for a month. I refused, absolutely. A month alone—with my thoughts? Without Dan? With nothing to drink? Heavens!

The strain began to tell on me physically. My fits of nausea were more and more frequent and severe and they were followed by headaches that nearly drove me mad. Jim, though opposed to anything of the kind, on one occasion gave me an injection of morphine to quiet my pain. He was terribly worried and at sea, for I would tell him nothing, nor would I permit an examination. And I refused medicine.

However, things could not go on this way forever. There's always a break. It may come early and it may come late. But it will come.

Jim had been called out of town in consultation. The night before the day he was expected to return, the Athertons gave a party. I went with Ethel and Dan.

When Jim came home he found me sicker than I had ever been before in my life. The terrible, wrenching nausea, the blinding headache! Will I ever forget that morning! He hurriedly washed up, slipped into one of his white office coats and sat down beside me, his cool fingers on my racing pulse, compassion and conjecture in his keen eyes. I recall the momentary sense of rest I had at the knowledge of his clean, strong nearness. Then a wrenching spasm shook me into a sobbing rag and I lay so for many minutes. When I was quieter Jim said:

"You've been like this a good many mornings recently. I'm beginning to think there's a cause." I grew tense. Did he know?

"Cause?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered. I opened my swollen eyes and looked at him. He was smiling. Then I knew what he meant! My nerves were so shattered that for a moment I became a crazy woman. I sat up in bed, my nightgown falling off my shoulders, and cried:

"That! That! You fool! And you a doctor! Can't you see I'm only suffering from drinking? O-oo-oo—" Almost fainting from the effort, I collapsed and lay a whimpering wreck on the pillows: a leather-skinned, dry-lipped wreck!

An awful silence followed my words. It lasted so long that I had fallen into a sort of stupor when finally I was roused by my husband's voice—hard, cold, incisive—like one of those instruments he knew so well how to use.

"So—*this* is the explanation!" Another silence. Then:

"You tippler! You sot!"

My mind leaped from drowsiness into terrible activity. With a cry I sat up, my eyes fairly starting from the yellowness that surrounded them. But he had left the room. Only his words remained—a memory to burn and brand me.

"You sot!"

A wave of nausea surged over me. And through my brain as I moaned with the pain, the words tumbled:

"You sot—you sot—you sot—!"

All that day I struggled alone with my terrible sickness. The two maids were sympathetic, but I felt their disapproval and contempt. One of them remarked:

"She shouldn't drink if she can't hold it any better." The other replied:

"No. And aint it the limit the way she looks! If Mr. Carson could see her now!"

So that was what people were thinking—and saying—behind my back! Linking my name with that of Ethel's husband! Well—I didn't care—but truth asserted itself. I *did* care. I cared terribly. I was ashamed, ashamed, ashamed! The woman I was shrank back appalled before the clear, accusing eyes of the girl I had been.

By night I was better and forced myself to dress for dinner. Jim, however, did not come home. The maids told me he had said before he left that he might have to sleep at the hospital. I waited all evening for some other message from him, but none came. As I was about to drag myself back to bed, Dan rang up. He told me Jim had had the hardest operation of his life that afternoon.

"He'll probably have to stay at the

hospital and that'll be a relief to you," he said. "Poor kid! I knew you'd be awfully sick to-day!" A shiver of repulsion ran over me. I realized then for the first time that *when I was strictly sober* Dan did not appeal to me!

"When you know I get sick why do you urge me to drink?" I asked coldly.

"Do you want to know?" His voice was very low.

"Yes."

"Because it's not until you've had *just so much* that I realize how *entirely* you are mine."

I grew cold to the roots of my hair. And I had let *this thing* masquerade as love! This drunken, sottish impulse toward another woman's husband! This feeling that he openly admitted only came when I had had—*just so much*!

"Are you there, sweetheart?"

"Yes," I answered, "but I'm going. I'm sick!" I crashed the receiver onto its hook and burying my head on my arms broke into hoarse, passionate sobbing. What had I done? What had I done! Sacrificed everything—and for what? For what? Dear Lord, for what! What had I got for the debasing of my ideals, for the defilement of my womanhood—for my unfairness to my husband? What had I to show but broken health, a dishonored home—and a married man's voice saying:

"It's only when you've had *just so much* that I realize how *entirely* you are mine."

Finally I went to bed. I lay rigid and cold between the sheets, my brain like a thing of fire. How I wanted Jim—Jim, who had loved me, on whose heart I had lain, whose arms I was never to know again. Jim, whom I had deceived, lied about, made fun of! Oh, yes, I did all of those things. The influence of alcohol on the mind of a temperamental and imaginative woman is the most devilish thing on earth. It makes a cruel, cunning, traitorous fiend of her. She is ominously self-pitying. She lives in a series of imaginative adventures that she weaves about herself as a poisonous spider weaves its web.

The clock was striking three when the door of my room opened noiselessly. By

the light from the hall I could see that it was Jim who stood there. My heart seemed to turn over and stop. I thought:

"He has come to kill me!" And I didn't care. I waited as long as I could; then I said dully:

"Come on. Kill me and get it over with!"

"I thought you were asleep," he said in his quiet way. "Don't be foolish. How are you feeling, Maud?"

I jumped out of bed and stood shivering and swaying.

"I've got to talk to you, Jim," I said. "Or—are you too tired?"

"Do you think," he asked, "that there is any need of talking?" I shook my head hopelessly.

"No," I said. "There's no use, of course. But, just the same, I've some things I must say before I—I've got to tell you something, Jim. Please—*please*—"

He threw my bath robe around me, picked me up and carried me into the living room. He placed me in a big fireside chair and lighted the gas grate. Then, seated opposite me, he waited courteously, his eyes on my ravaged face.

"You called me a sot this morning," I said. The blood flooded his temples.

"Don't you think I remember!" he exclaimed. "It was unpardonable! I—lost my head. Forgive me, Maud!"

I looked at him curiously. To myself I seemed as a being apart, sitting in judgment.

"Why?" I asked. "I was, wasn't I? You were quite right. Now listen to the rest about me."

I told him everything in the same detached, passionless manner. I might have been talking about some other woman for whom I felt so profound a contempt that it wearied me. Not once did he interrupt me.

For a long time after I had finished we sat like statues, looking into the fire. Finally he said:

"Well, what's the answer?"

"Divorce," I said. "Of course."

"No," he said. "Divorce—in this case—is no answer. It would merely be an attempt to slough responsibility by all concerned. How could it possibly rem-

edy matters? You couldn't marry Dan if you wanted to—and you say that when you're sober—you don't care for him. So I don't imagine you'd tie up with him if you could. How then would divorce make things any better?"

"Better for you," I said. "You'd be free. You could marry again and be happy." He shook his head.

"No," he replied, "I could never be happy with a scandal behind me. A phoenix was never known to arise from pitch. And, as you know, I'm an old-fashioned man in a good many ways. I'm not the sort that loves and marries willy nilly. So, divorce wouldn't help matters any for me. What about you, yourself? What's your idea?"

"I will go back to work," I said calmly. "And get back my self-respect. I don't see how I could have fallen so low, but now that I *do* see just where I am and *what* I am—you spoke truly this morning—I'll never rest until I'm back where I used to be."

"What I cannot understand," Jim said, his eyes thoughtful, "is how you ever came to drink—when you hate it so. Or why you kept it up when you saw what it was doing to you. I cannot understand!"

"And I can't explain. I just did—that's all. But it's over and I'm going away to prove to you that I'm one woman who can 'come back.' I won't stay down. You'll hear from me and you'll be proud of what you hear."

Again silence fell between us. Then he said gently:

"Must you necessarily go away? Must leaving me be the answer to your problem? Maud, be honest with yourself and with me, and tell me—do you love me

as you did when we were married? Or was it because you gradually ceased to care—that I failed to make you happy—that you went in for—this sort of thing? If you don't care, why, I won't try to hold you. But if you do—if you should still care—"

I leaned forward, my haggard eyes searching his face. My heart was pumping wildly.

"Jim," I cried, "do you mean to tell me that you *want* me after this? That you are willing to live with me? That *you love me?* Jim!"

He came to me swiftly and took me into his arms.

"Why, little girl," he said, "that's not the question. My love for you is the one thing on earth I'm sure of. The girl I loved and married is the same to-day as she was then. The creature of the past few months is a stranger—as much to you as she is to me—and I'm willing to bet she's gone for good. The question now is: Mrs. Browning, do you love your husband?"

Love him!

It took me a number of months to get back my health and my sane outlook. It's always so much easier to fall than to climb. There were times when, blue and depressed, I longed for "a little one," but those words spoken on that gray morning proved an effectual barrier between myself and even a smell of the stuff.

"You sot!"

When temptation came I would run to a mirror. I would gaze at my clear eyes and firm skin and red lips, then close my eyes and picture myself as I knew I had looked that morning.

It was enough!

PHILO GUBB and the two-cent stamp

*The Correspondence School
Detective Needs the Money*

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs is Pigs," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN

NO, you can't go ahead with puttin' the wall paper on this kitchen ceilin' to-day, Mr. Gubb," said Aunt Martha Turner to Philo Gubb, the paper-hanger-correspondence-school-detective.

"I'd like to, if I could," said Philo Gubb wistfully. "I've got all my stuff here, Miss Turner, and I'd like to finish up the job. My financial condition aint such as to allow me to waste a day. I'm very low in a monetary shape, right now, and I'd admire to do this job up quick. Detecting aint been good at all, and no paper-hanging to speak of."

Aunt Martha Turner looked at the flamingo-like face of the paper-hanger, and noted the lines of care. Although it was still early morning, Miss Turner was wearing her bonnet, and was evidently ready to go out. Her usually placid face was flushed, and she too seemed worried.

"Well," she said reluctantly, "I guess if that's the case you might as well go ahead, but I dare say you'll dirty up this kitchen so I'll never get it clean again. I expect I'll have to be out of the house 'most all day. I've got some business to attend to. If you get done before I get back, lock the kitchen door and put the key behind a shutter. And don't make no more muss than you have to."

She opened her shopping bag, looked in it, as women do when about to leave the house, and departed, and Philo Gubb set up his two step-ladders and

put his trestle board across them. He opened his pasting table, unrolled and trimmed a strip of wall paper, pasted it, and climbed the ladder. At the top he seated himself a moment and shook his head. He was miserable, and, as if to renew his misery, he took a telegram from his pocket and re-read it.

The telegram was from his brother, in Derlingport, and was a plea for money. Unless the interest on a chattel mortgage on the brother's little shoe business was paid the next day, the mortgager would foreclose, and the business would be ruined. The out-of-town creditors would swoop down the moment the mortgage was filed. The telegram did not say all this. Philo Gubb had had a letter a few days before, explaining it all. The mortgage was for four thousand dollars, with interest at six per cent, payable twice a year, and \$120 was now due. "If you can let me have \$120," the letter had said, "I'll send it back just as soon as I can. I thought Griggs would let this interest run over, but he wont. I've got to pay it. If it is not convenient for you to let me have the \$120, just write and say so, and I'll sell the little automobile delivery wagon I've just bought, but I hate to do it, for it would look bad to sell it so soon after getting it."

Philo Gubb had written that to part with \$120 just then would "cramp" him. As a matter of fact, he did not have \$120. As he sat on the top of

the step-ladder his quick cash assets consisted of just one two-cent stamp, since he had just had an unfortunate experience in investing the reward he had won in a gold mine—which was all right except that there was no gold and no mine. And he had received—before starting for Aunt Martha Turner's that morning—this telegram:

Must have one hundred and twenty dollars to-morrow. Automobile caught fire and burned.

He looked glum, and he felt glum. He had about as much chance of raising one hundred and twenty dollars before the next day as he had of buying the whole city of Riverbank.

He sighed and picked up the paste-covered strip of ceiling paper, but before he could get to his feet the kitchen door opened and "Snooks" Turner put his head in cautiously.

"Say, Gubb, where's Aunt Martha?" he asked in a whisper.

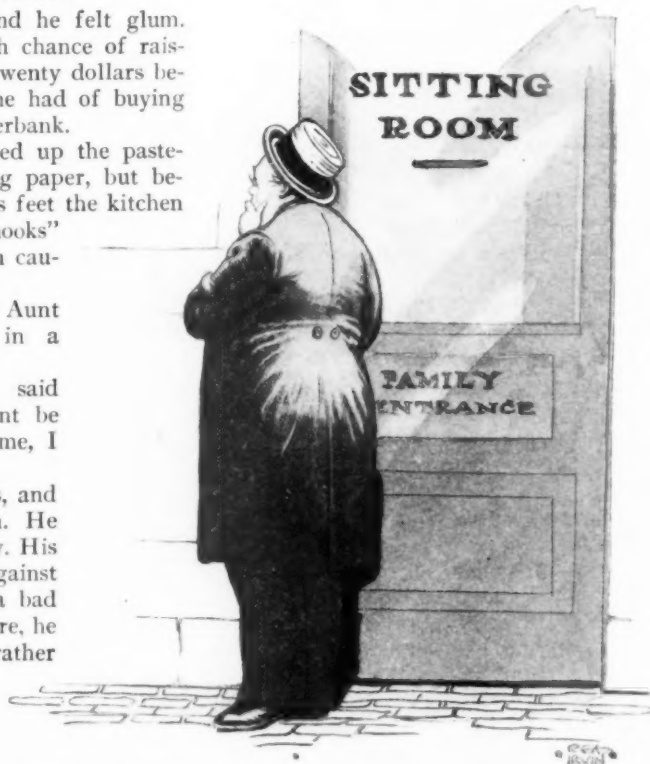
"She's gone out," said Philo Gubb. "She won't be back for quite some time, I guess, Snooksy."

"Good!" said Snooks, and he entered the kitchen. He was not a handsome boy. His fox-like face was against him, but he was not a bad fellow. Some years before, he had trained with a rather tough gang, and had helped them "whoop things up" in town, but he had dropped his bad habits and his evil companions

when he met Nan Kilfillan. He was deeply in love with Nan, and Nan was a good girl, although Aunt Martha Turner did not approve of her, because she was "hired girl" to City Attorney Mullens. Aunt Martha would have had Snooks look higher, but the general opinion was that Nan was just the sort of girl to "make something" of Snooks. Before she had met Snooks she had done her best to "make something" of "Slippery" Williams, who was court-

ing her then, but that task was beyond even Nan's powers. "Slippery" teetered on the edge of respectability, with frequent falls on the wrong side, until Nan became disgusted, and when she told him she was through with him he went altogether to the bad.

But Snooks, once aware that Nan would stand no nonsense, braced up, and finally got a job on the *Eagle* as city reporter, with the dignified title of



City Attorney Mullen had not sufficient evidence to close the saloons.

City Editor, and he was making good. He got the news. He seemed able to smell news. He could hear it rumbling. He could see it before it was in sight. When there was big news in the air he would become uneasy and feel nervous.

"I got the twitches again," he would say to the editor of the *Eagle*. "There's some big item around. I've got to get it." And he would get it.

Most of the news related to the liquor situation in Riverbank. The local-option

bill had been passed by the legislature, and Riverbank had gone "dry" to the extent of electing the city attorney, whose business it was to prosecute the law-breakers—meaning the saloon-keepers. City Attorney Mullen, elected on the joint Prohibition-Republican ticket, with the understanding that he would close the saloons, had not closed them. The *Eagle*, being the organ of the "drys," had been talking plainly to Attorney Mullen for a month, asking him, in huge black letters, to "GET BUSY OR GET OUT!"

The Ladies' Temperance League had petitioned the city council to impeach Mullen, and Aunt Martha Turner, as a member of the League, had done her best to bring the League to this action. She said she had no faith in Attorney Mullen, or in his oft repeated assurance that he would close the saloons, but that he had not sufficient evidence yet.

"If that man haint got evidence," said Aunt Martha, "he could go and get Philo Gubb, and Philo Gubb could get evidence. He's a detective, aint he?"

"He studied in a correspondence school, if you call that bein' a detective," said Mrs. Wilmerton. "I don't know as he ever detected nothin' except by mistake, when he was tryin' to detect somethin' else."

"Then Attorney Mullen ought to set him to detectin' somethin' else, and let him catch the saloon-keepers," said Aunt Martha logically. "I aint got a mite of faith in that Mullen. If somebody don't show him up, I will."

"She's gone out, has she?" said Snooks, when he had entered the kitchen and asked Philo Gubb about Aunt Martha. "That's good. I wanted to see you on a matter of business—detective business."

He put his hand in his pocket and drew out a small roll of bills, while Philo Gubb looked at him curiously. He was not the usually neat Snooks. One eye was blackened and one side of his face was scratched. His clothes were badly torn and soiled. He looked as if some one had tried to murder him.

"There!" he said, holding the bills up to Philo Gubb after counting them.

"There's twenty-five dollars, and that's every cent of my last month's salary, and it's lucky I didn't have a chance to spend it. You take that and find out what I did, and what's the matter with me, and all about it."

"What do you want me to find out?" asked Mr. Gubb, fondling the bills.

"If I knew, I wouldn't ask you," said Snooks peevishly. "I don't know what it is, but I've got the twitches again, and there's a big item around somewhere. I'd go and get it myself, but I'm in jail."

"Where did you say you was?" asked Philo Gubb.

"In jail," said Snooks. "I'm in jail, and I'm in bad. When the marshal put me in last night I gave him my word I'd stay in all day to-day, and it aint right for me to be here now. 'Dog-gone you, Snooks!' he says, 'you aint got no consideration for me at all. Here I figured that there wouldn't be no wave of crime strike town for some days, and I went and took the jail door down to the blacksmith to have a panel put in where the one rusted out, and my wife made me promise to drive out to the farm with her to-morrow, and now you come and spoil everything. I got to stay in town and watch you.'

"Go on," I says, 'and take your drive. I'll stay in jail. I got a strong imagination. I'll imagine there's a door.'

"Honor bright?" he says.

"Yes, honor bright," I says.

"So he went," said Snooks, "and he's trusting me, and here I am. You can see it wouldn't do for me to be running all over town when, by rights, I'm locked and barred and bolted in jail. I've got imagination enough to imagine a door on the jail, and I've got imagination enough to imagine the jail stretches up as far as Aunt Martha's, but the marshal hasn't got imagination enough to imagine that the jail reaches all over town. And I haven't imagination enough, myself, to imagine why I'm locked and barred and bolted in jail, and well started on my way to the penitentiary as a burglar."

"As a burglar!" exclaimed Gubb.

"That's it!" said Snooks. "I can't see

head or tail of it. You got to help me out, Gubb. See if you can make any sense of this:

"Last night I went out for a walk with Nan. She's my girl, you know, and she's going to marry me. Maybe she wont now, but she was going to. She works for Mullen. We got back to Mullen's house about eleven o'clock, and Mrs. Mullen always wants Nan in by half past ten, and she locks the door at half past ten, whether Nan is in or not. So, being late, we had to ring the door bell, and Mr. Mullen came to the door to let Nan in, and when he saw I was with her he shook hands with me and asked me to come in and have a cigar, and sit awhile, but I told him I had to hustle up some news for to-day's paper, and he let me go. That's how pleasant he was. So I went down town, and the first fellow I met was Sammy Wilmerton."

"Widow Wilmerton's boy?" asked Philo Gubb.

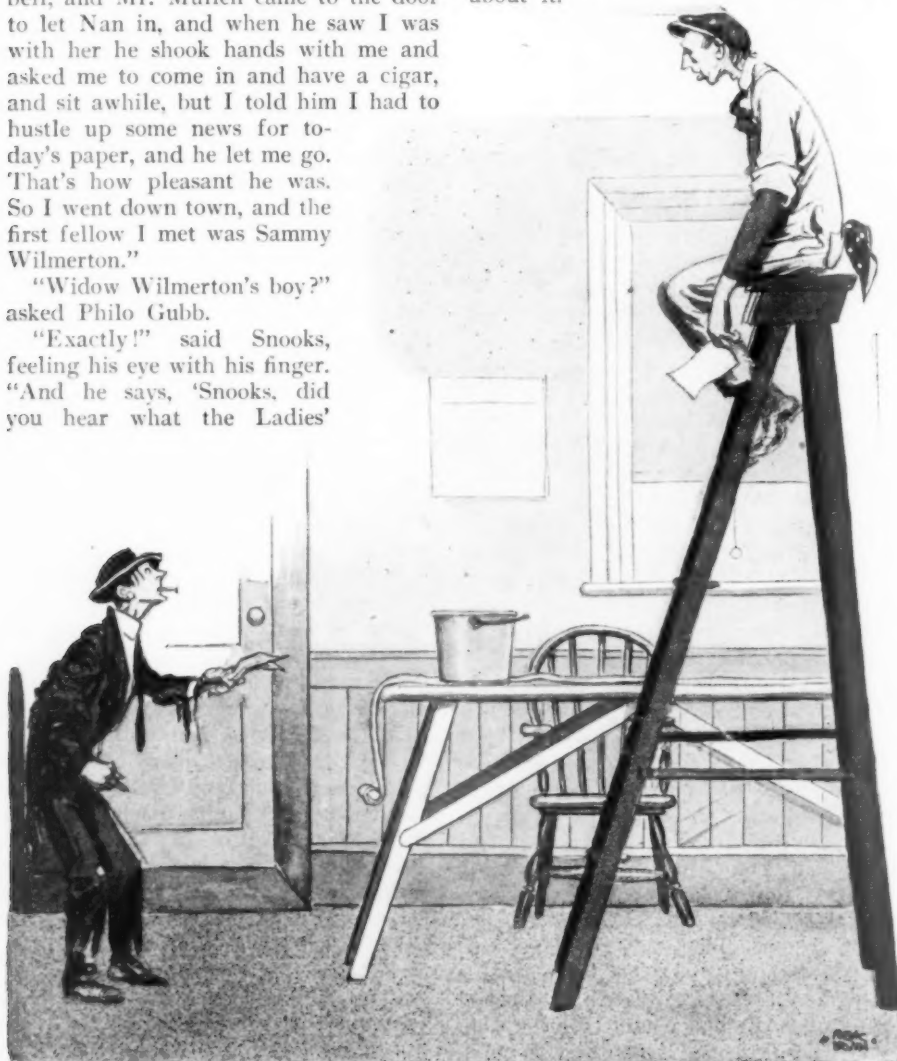
"Exactly!" said Snooks, feeling his eye with his finger. "And he says, 'Snooks, did you hear what the Ladies'

Temperance League did last night?' I hadn't heard. 'I heard Ma say,' says Sammy, 'but don't say I told you. They got up a petition to have City Attorney Mullen impeached by the City Council.'

"Well, that was news. I went into the *Eagle* office and called up Mullen. 'Hello! Is that Attorney Mullen?' I says.

"Yes," he says.

"Well, something happened last night," I says, 'and I'd like to see you about it.'



"I want to see you on a matter of business Detective business."

"How do you know what happened?" he says.

"No matter," I says; 'can I come up?'

"After a half a minute he says, 'Oh, yes! Come up. Come right away. I'll be waiting for you.'

"So I went."

"Nothing strange about that," said Philo Gubb, shifting himself on the ladder.

"So I went," continued Snooks. "I rang the door-bell and, the moment it rang, the door flew open and—bliff!—down came a bed-blanket over me and somebody grabbed me in his arms and hugged me into the house. I guess it was Attorney Mullen—you know how big and husky he is. But I couldn't see him. I couldn't see anything. Only, every two seconds, bump! he hit at my head through the blanket. That's how I got this eye. And, all the time, he was talking to me, mad as a hatter, and I couldn't hear a word he said. But I could hear his wife screaming at the top of the stairs, and I could hear Nan screaming, and I heard a window go up.

"Stop that yelling!" says Mullen. in a voice I *could* hear, and then he picked me up again and carried me to the back-door, and opened it and threw me all the way down the eight steps. I chucked off the blanket, and I was going up the steps again, to show him he couldn't treat me that way, when bing! somebody next door took a shot at me with a revolver. Thought I was a burglar, I guess. I started to run for the back gate, when bing! somebody shot at me from the other house. What do you think of that? For a few minutes it sounded like the battle of San Juan, and I can't understand yet why I didn't suffer an awful loss of life."

"But you didn't?" asked Philo Gubb.

"No, siree! I made a dive for the cellar door, just as they got the range. I stayed in the cellarway, with the bullets pattering on it like hail, until the cop came. Tim Fogarty was the cop. He ordered 'Cease firing!' and the shower stopped, and I let him capture me. He took me to the calaboose, and this morning, early, he had me before

the judge, and I'm held for the grand jury, and the charge is burglary and petit larceny. Now what is the answer?"

"Being pulled into a house and thrown out the other door isn't burglary," said Philo Gubb. "Burglary is breaking in or breaking out. Maybe Attorney Mullen will tell about it. He must have mistook you for some one else."

"Mistook nothing!" said Snooks. "He was in the court room this morning. He handled the case against me. Who is that?"

Some one was climbing the back steps, and Snooks made one dive for the inside cellar door, and slipped inside. He knew how to get out through the cellar, for he was familiar with it. His room was on the second floor, for he lived with his Aunt Martha. He did not wait now, but opened the outside cellar door, and after looking to see that the way was clear, hurried back to the jail.

Philo Gubb did not have time to descend from his ladder before the kitchen door opened. The visitor was Policeman Fogarty.

"Mawrnin'!" he said, removing his hat and wiping the sweat-band with his red handkerchief. "Don't ye get down, Misther Gubb, sor. I want but a wurrd with ye. I seen Snooksy Tur-rner here but a sicond ago, me lookin' in at the windy, an' you an' him conversin'. Mayhap he was speakin' t' ye iv his arrest?"

"He was conversing with me of that occurrence," said Philo Gubb. "He was consulting me in my professional capacity."

"An' a fine young lad he is!" said Policeman Fogarty, reaching into his pocket. "I got th' divvil for arrestin' him. 'Twas that dark, ye see, Misther Gubb, I cud not see who I was arrestin'. Maybe he was consultin' ye about gettin' clear iv th' charge aginst him?"

"He retained my detective services," said Philo Gubb.

"Poor young man!" said Fogarty. "I'll warrant he has none too much money. Me hear-rt bleeds for him. Ye'll have no ind iv trai'in' an' shadowin' an' other detective wurrk to do awn th' case,

no doubt. 'Tis ixpensive wurrk, that! I was thinkin' maybe ye'd permit me t' contribute a five-dollar bill t' th' wurrk, for I'm that sad t' have had a hand in arristin' him."

Fogarty held up the bill and Philo Gubb took it.

"Contingent expenses are always numerously present in detective operations," he said.

"Right ye ar-re!" said Fogarty. "An' ye'll remimber, if anywan asks ye, that I ixprised me contrition for arristin' Snooksy. Whist!" he said, putting his hand alongside his mouth and whispering: "See Miss Turner! Whin ye get t' wurrk awn th' case, see Miss Turner!"

"Thank you!" said Philo Gubb.

"Ye're welcome," said Fogarty. "An' don't let me intherrupt ye at yer wurrk of paper-hangin'. Some wan wanted me t' search th' house here t' see did Snooksy have anny stolen stuff hid about. I'll not be long. I'll not find much, I'm thinkin'."

Philo Gubb sat on the ladder and contemplated the five dollar bill. Then he slipped it into his pocket as he heard Fogarty returning. Fogarty looked worried.

"Hist!" he said. "There's sivin bottles iv beer an' a silver beer-opener in Snooksy's room. I did not see thim, mind ye! I might iv seen thim if I'd left thim awn the floor, in th' corner, where they were whin I wint up, but I put thim in th' bed, betwane th' mat-thress an' th' quilt."

Fogarty slipped out of the back door and was gone, and Philo Gubb, after a thoughtful moment, decided that the five-dollar bill was rightfully his, and slipped it into his pocket. To earn it, however, he must get to work on the case. Until Snooks Turner was out of jail and free from suspicion he would not feel comfortable in the possession of the money. He raised the pasted strip of paper, but before he could place the loose end on the ceiling, some one tapped at the kitchen door.

"Come in!" he called, and the door opened. "Slippery" Williams glided into the room. His crafty eyes sought Philo Gubb,

"'Lo, Gubby! Watcha doin' up there? Where's Miss Turner?" he asked.

"Miss Turner is out on business, I presume," said the correspondence-school detective coldly, "and I am pursuing my professional duties in the detecting line."

"Yar, hey?" said Slippery. "Who you detectin' for now?"

"Snooks Turner," said Philo Gubb. "I'm solving that case."

Instantly Slippery's manner changed. From rough he became smooth. From bold he became cringing.

"Why, I'm Snooksy's friend," he said. "You know me and Snooksy was always chums, don't you, Gubby? Bet we were. Yes sir, I think a lot of Snooksy. *He* didn't tell me he'd hire you. He just says, 'Slippery, you go up to my room and get me a bundle of clean clothes—these are all torn and dirty, and—Well, I guess I'll get 'em, and get back. Snooks is waitin' for me.'"

He turned to the hall, but Philo Gubb called him back.

"You can't go up there until Miss Turner gets back," said Philo Gubb, from his ladder-top. "There's been enough folks up there already."

"Who was up?" asked Slippery hastily.

"Policeman Fogarty was," said Philo Gubb.

"What'd he find up there?" asked Slippery anxiously.

"Nothin'," said Philo Gubb. "I understand there was some bottles of beer and a beer-opener up there once, but Fogarty didn't find them. He told me so."

"He told you what?"

"He told me he couldn't find seven bottles of beer and a beer-opener."

"Look here!" said Slippery sweetly. "If I gave you five dollars to hire you to hunt for them, could you find them seven bottles of beer and that beer-opener for me? Straight detective work? Could you?"

"I could find them," said Philo Gubb.

"Well, that's all I want," said Slippery. "I don't want to do nothin' with them. All I want to know is—where are they? Here's five dollars."

Philo Gubb took the money.

"They're upstairs, in Snooks' bed," said Philo Gubb.

"Hid?" asked Slippery.

"Between the quilt and the mattress," said Philo Gubb.

"In Snooks' room?" asked Slippery.

"That's where they are," said Philo.

"All right. Maybe I'd better take them a way," suggested Slippery. "I guess that's what Snooks stole when he broke into Attorney Mullen's house."

"He didn't break into Mullen's house," said Philo.

"Oh, didn't he?"

said Slippery scornfully. "You better let me get away with that beer and that beer-opener. Somebody will find that evidence on Snooks, and then where will he be?"

"Not until Miss Turner comes home," said Philo firmly. "It's her house."

"Why, you long-legged stork you!" said Slippery, "she knows I'm here for that beer. She sent me."

"I thought you said Snooks sent you for his clothes," said Philo.

"Never you mind who sent me for what!" said Slippery angrily. "You're a dandy detective, aint you? Sittin' on top of a ladder, and not lettin' a friend of Snooks help him out. Say, listen, Gubby! Everybody's goin' to get into worse trouble if I don't get away with that beer. Understand? Come on! Let me take it away!"

"When Miss Turner comes back!" said Philo Gubb.

A new knock on the door interrupted them, and Slippery glided to the cellar door, through which Snooks had so recently fled. The kitchen door opened to admit Attorney Smith. He was a thin man, but intelligent-looking, as thin men quite frequently are.



"Don't get down, Mr. Gubb, don't get down!" he said. "I came in the back way, hoping to find Miss Turner. She is not here?"

"She's out," said Philo.

"Too bad!" said Attorney Smith. "I wanted to see her about her nephew. You have heard he is in jail?"

"Why, yes," said Philo, crossing one leg over the other. "He hired me to do some detecting on that case. I'm sort of in charge of that case. I'm just going to start in looking it up."

Attorney Smith took a turn to the end of the room and back. He was known in Riverbank as the unsuccessful competitor against Attorney Mullen for the City Attorneyship, and was supposed to be the counselor of the liquor interests.

"You have done nothing yet?" he asked suddenly, stopping below Philo Gubb's elevated seat.

"No, I'm just about beginning to commence," said Philo.

"Then you know nothing regarding the—the articles young Turner is charged with stealing?"

"Well, maybe I do know something

about that," said Philo. "If you mean seven bottles of beer and a beer-opener, I do."

"Where are they?" asked Attorney Smith in the sharp tone he used in addressing a witness for the other side when he was trying a case.

"I guess I've told about all I'm going to tell about them," said Philo thoughtfully. "I don't want to be disobliging, Mister Smith, but I look on them bottles of beer as a clue, and that beer-opener as a clue, and they're about the only clue I've got. This looks like a difficult case to me, and I got to save up my clues from this on."

"Are they in this house?" asked Mr. Smith sharply.

"If they aint, they're somewheres else," said Philo. "I know where they are."

"Mr. Gubb," said Mr. Smith impressively, "there are large interests at stake in this case. Larger interests than you imagine. We are all interested at this moment in clearing your client of the suspicion, which I hope is an unjust suspicion, now resting over and upon him. I need not say what the interests are, but they are very powerful. I feel confident that those interests could succeed in clearing Snooks Turner."

"Well, I guess, if I was left alone long enough to get down from this ladder, I could clear him myself. I didn't study in the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting for nothing," said Philo Gubb. "Snooks hired me—"

"And he did well!" said Attorney Smith heartily. "I praise his acumen. I wonder if I might be permitted, on behalf of the powerful interests I represent, to contribute to the expense of the work you will do?"

"I guess you might," said Philo Gubb. "Detecting runs into money."

"The interests I represent," said Mr. Smith, taking out his wallet, "will contribute thirty dollars." And they did. They put three crisp ten-dollar bills in Philo Gubb's hands.

"And now, having shown our unity of interest with young Mr. Turner, there can be no harm in telling us where that beer is, can there?"

"That beer is up in Snooks' room, between the blanket and the mattress," said Philo, "and it is going to stay there until Miss Turner says it can be moved."

"Just so!" said Mr. Smith, with a shade of disappointment in his voice.

"Well—ah—yes, just so!"

He turned toward the kitchen door, which was standing open, for Nan Killfillan stood there. Her eyes were red and swollen. Attorney Smith politely excused himself and went away, and Nan came into the kitchen.

"Oh, Mr. Gubb!" she exclaimed. "You *will* get Snooks out of jail, wont you? He is so down-hearted. It would break my heart if he was sent to the penitentiary, and I *know* he has done nothing wrong! He is depending on you, Mr. Gubb. I brought you ten dollars—it is all I have left of last month's wages, but it will help a little, wont it?"

"Thank you," said Philo Gubb, taking the money. "I cannot estimate in advance what the cost of his clearance—to use the word—will be. It may be more, and it may be less. It is a complicated case. I am just about going to get down from this ladder and start working on it vigorously. If you—"

He stopped.

"If you wish to help us in this case, Miss Killfillan," he said, "will you go to the jail and ask Snooks what he wants done with the beer and the beer-opener?"

"With the—" Her face went white. "What beer and what beer-opener?" she asked tensely.

"The beer and beer-opener in his room," said Philo Gubb.

"But—is there beer in Snooks' room? Oh, don't tell me that, Mr. Gubb; tell me anything but that!"

"Seven bottles and a beer-opener," said Philo Gubb.

"Oh!" she moaned. "And he said he didn't do it! He swore he didn't do it! Oh, Snooks, how could you—how could you!"

"Now, don't you weep like that," said Philo Gubb soothingly. "You go and ask him what he wants done with it, and tell him I'll do it, and then come back here. I'll have my things ready for

my immediate departure on the case by the time you get back."

Nan hurried away, and Philo Gubb waited only to count the money he had so far received. It amounted to seventy-five dollars. He slipped it into his pocket and stood up on the step-ladder. He had even proceeded so far as to put one foot on a lower step, when Mrs. Wilmerton entered the kitchen.

She was a stout woman, and she was almost out of breath. She had to stand a minute before she could speak, but as she stood she made gestures with her hands, as if *that* much of her delivery could be given at any rate, and the words might catch up with their appropriate gestures if they could.

"Mister Gubb! Mister Gubb!" she gasped. "Oh, this is terrible! Terrible! Miss Turner should never have dared it! Never have dared it! Oh, my breath! Do you—do you know where the beer is?"

"Yes'm," said Philo Gubb, "but I wouldn't advise you to take beer for shortness of the breath. Just rest a minute."

"But we can't have the beer here!" gasped poor Mrs. Wilmerton. "I *told* Miss Turner it was folly! She's so stubborn! Ah—h! I thought I'd never get a full breath again as long as I lived. How can we get rid of the beer?"

"There's plenty want to take it," said Mr. Gubb. "Attorney Smith—"

"Oh, I knew it! I knew it!" moaned Mrs. Wilmerton. "He threatened it!"

"Threatened what?" asked Philo Gubb.

"That he would find the beer in this house!" cried Mrs. Wilmerton. "He threatened Aunt Martha that if she did not give it to him freely, he would have it found here, and make a scandal! Beer hidden between the quilt and the mattress of Aunt Martha's bed, and she Secretary of the Ladies' Temperance League! It's awful! Martha is so head-strong! She's getting herself in an awful fix! She never should have had a thing to do with that Slippery fellow!"

"With who? With Slippery Williams?" asked Philo Gubb, intensely surprised. "Aunt Martha Turner? What

did she have to do with Slippery Williams?"

"Well, she had plenty, and enough, and more than that to do with him," said Mrs. Wilmerton angrily. "Getting bottles of beer in her bed, and robbing houses at her time of life, and wanting the Ladies' Temperance League to have a special meeting this morning to approve of burglary and larceny! At her age!"

"Now, Miss Wilmerton," said Philo Gubb, from the top of the ladder, "I'd ought to warn you, before you go any farther, that Snooks Turner has engaged me and my services to detect for him in this burglar case, and I've got my duty to perform, like any other man. If Aunt Martha Turner burgled the burglary that Snooks is in jail for, maybe you ought not say anything about it to me. I got to do what I can to free Snooksy, no matter who it gets into trouble, and while I don't wish a nice old lady like Aunt Martha Turner any ill, if Snooksy can only get out by her getting in, in she goes! That is, if I can detect how she done the job. I would never have expected it of her."

"Land sakes!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmerton. "*Who would* expect it of her?"

"I'll be mighty sorry," said Philo Gubb, "if, when I get to work on the case, my clues lead me to Aunt Martha Turner. I'd rather be using my skill and experience for her than against her."

"Mr. Gubb!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmerton suddenly. "Mr. Gubb, I'm not authorized so to do, but I'll warrant I'll get the other ladies to authorize, or I'll know why. If I was to give you twenty dollars on behalf of the Ladies' Temperance League to help get Snooksy out of jail,—and land only knows why he is in jail,—would you be so kind as to beg and plead with Snooksy to leave Attorney Mullen alone, in the *Eagle*, after this?"

She held four five-dollar bills up to Philo Gubb, and he took them.

"From what I know of this case," said Mr. Gubb, "I guess Snooks will be willing to leave Attorney Mullen alone in every shape and form from now on. Unless he kills him at first sight. I'll do

my best to prevent murder. Now, maybe you can tell me how Snooks got into this business."

"I haven't the slightest idea in the world!" said Mrs. Wilmerton. "All I know about it is—"

Both Mrs. Wilmerton and Philo Gubb turned their heads toward the door. The greater duskiness of the kitchen was caused by the large form of City Attorney Mullen. He bowed ceremoniously to Mrs. Wilmerton, who turned bright red with embarrassment, probably because of her part in the efforts of the League to have Mr. Mullen impeached by the City Council. Attorney Mullen was not, however, embarrassed.

"I am glad you are here, Mrs. Wilmerton," he said, "for I wish a witness. I do not wish to have any stigma of bribery rest on me. I came here," he continued, taking a leather purse from the inner pocket of his coat, "to give these twenty-five dollars to Mr. Gubb. Mr. Gubb, I have just visited Snooks—so called—Turner at the jail. I went there with the intention of bailing him out, pending the simple process of his ultimate and speedy release from the charges against him. I am convinced that I was wrong when I made the charge of burglary against him. I am convinced that no burglary was ever committed on my premises—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmerton. "Not even seven bottles of beer and a beer-opener, I suppose!"

Attorney Mullen turned on her like a flash.

"What do you know about beer and beer-openers?" he snapped.

"I may not know as much as Detective Gubb, but I know what I know!" she answered, and Mr. Mullen restrained himself sufficiently to hide the glare of hatred in his eyes by turning to Philo Gubb.

"Exactly!" he said with forced calmness. "And perhaps I know more about them than Mr. Gubb knows. In fact, I do know more about them. I know they are upstairs between a blanket and a mattress. I know, Mrs. Wilmerton," he almost shouted, turning on her with an

accusing forefinger, "that they were stolen from a house in this town by some one representing the Ladies' Temperance League. I know that burglary was committed by, or at the behest of, some one representing the Ladies' Temperance League! I know that, if this matter is carried to the end, a respectable old lady—a leader in the Ladies' Temperance League—will go behind the bars, sentenced as a burglar! That's what I know!"

"Oh, my!" gasped Mrs. Wilmerton, and sank into a chair.

"Now, then!" said Attorney Mullen, turning to Philo Gubb again, and handing him the twenty-five dollars, "I give you this money as my share of the fund that is to pay you for the work you do for Snooks Turner. I make no request, because of the money. It is yours. But if you love justice, for Heaven's sake, send word to him to come out of jail!"

"Wont he come?" asked Philo Gubb, puzzled.

"No, he wont!" said Attorney Mullen. "I begged him to, but he said 'No! Not until Philo Gubb gets to the bottom of this case. I paid him to get to the bottom of it, and before he gets through I'll have my money's worth. You know Gubb,' he said to me, 'and you know what it means when he gets to working on a case. Maybe he never finds out anything about the case he is working on, but somebody lands in jail before he gets through. I don't know what he'll discover, but he'll discover something. I'm just mad enough to let him go ahead,' says Snooks, 'and I'm just gambler enough to guess that if he gets poking around your affairs he'll discover something you wont want to see in the *Eagle*.' Of course that is nonsense," said Attorney Mullen. "I have nothing to fear. But should we, as citizens, and as members of the Prohibition Party, permit you, Mr. Gubb, to land Aunt Martha Turner in the calaboose?"

"Well, if what I find out, when I get down from this ladder and start to work, sends her there, I don't see that I can help it," said Philo Gubb. "Detective work is a science, as operated by them that has studied in the Rising Sun

'Correspondence School of Detecting—'

"Snooks says he don't know anything about any beer," said Nan Kilfillan, entering hastily, and then pausing, as she saw Mr. Mullen.

"Did you tell him it was up in his room, in his bed?" asked Philo Gubb.

"In his room? In his bed?" said Attorney Mullen, eagerly. "Why, that puts an entirely different aspect on the matter! That gives me, as City Attorney, all the proof I shall need to convict the respectable Miss Martha Turner and her honorable nephew of the *Eagle*. And, by the gods! I *will* convict them!"

He glared at Mrs. Wilmerton. Nan broke into sobs.

"Unless," he added gently, "this whole matter is dropped."

Philo Gubb took out all the money he had received and counted it, sitting cross-legged on the ladder.

"I guess," he said, thoughtfully, "you had better run up to the jail and tell Snooksy I want to see him right away, Miss Kilfillan. Maybe he can stretch the jail that much again. Tell him I'm just going to get down from this ladder and start to work, and I want to ask his advice."

"What do you want to ask him?" inquired Attorney Mullen, as Nan hurried away.

"I want to ask him about those seven bottles of beer and that beer-opener," said Philo Gubb.

"Mr. Gubb," said the City Attorney, "I can tell you about those bottles of beer. If Aunt Martha Turner goes to the penitentiary, those bottles of beer came from my house. If she does not go to the penitentiary, there are no bottles of beer and there is no beer-opener. And never were! If Aunt Martha Turner—dear old soul—goes to the penitentiary, perhaps to die there before her term is served, some one broke into my house night before last and stole those bottles



"Mr. Gubb! Mr. Gubb! Oh, this is terrible!"

of beer from a cabinet under my desk, and brought them here. If she does not go to the penitentiary, that beer never existed. If Aunt Martha Turner goes to the penitentiary, a poor old convict, I can imagine that in her eagerness to secure proof that I was not doing my duty as City Attorney, she sought, by fair means or foul, to prove that I was myself a beer-drinker. If Aunt Martha Turner goes to the penitentiary, I can imagine that some sneak, peering in at my window, saw me take a harmless glass of beer—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmerton.

"Harmless *or* harmful," conceded Attorney Mullen, "and told Aunt Martha, and that, in her mistaken zeal, she paid some one to burglarize my home and steal the beer and the beer-opener, to use as evidence."

"I told her she had done a foolish, foolish thing!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmerton.

"Just so! And it *was* foolish," said Attorney Mullen. "*If* it was done. And, if it was done, and Snooks Turner telephoned me last night that he wished to speak of what happened night before last, and I thought he meant the burglary, while he thought of the petition for impeachment, he would come to my home peacefully, and I would, naturally, assault him."

"You hurt him bad," said Philo Gubb.

"And I meant to!" said Attorney Mullen.

All turned toward the door, where Policeman Fogarty entered with Snooksy and Nan.

"I've done ivrything I cud t' quiet th' matter up," said Fogarty, thus explaining his interest in the affair.

Snooksy looked from one to another and grinned. Slippery Williams had visited him at the jail, trying to get a written order commanding Philo Gubb to give up the beer, and had pleaded that it was necessary for the health of Slippery Williams that the beer and the beer-opener disappear forever. He had admitted that he had broken into Attorney Mullen's house, but laid the blame on Aunt Martha, who had put him up to it, and had paid him for doing

the job. Attorney Smith had visited him, urging him to use his influence to prevent his Aunt Martha from forcing the impeachment of his brother attorney. Attorney Smith—although he did not say so—had been prompted to this by a hint from Attorney Mullen that, unless the impeachment was dropped, the saloons would all be closed before sundown.

"I like jail," said Snooks cheerfully. "I'm going to stay in jail."

Aunt Martha Turner interrupted him. She came into the kitchen like a gust of wind, scattering the others like leaves, and threw her arms around her nephew Snooksy.

"Oh, my Snooksy! My Snooksy!" she moaned. "Don't you love your old aunty any more? Wont you be a good boy for your poor old aunty? Don't you love her at all any more?"

"Sure," said Snooks happily. "A fellow can't get into much trouble in jail, can he?"

"But, wont you come out?" she pleaded. "Everybody wants you to come out, dear, dear boy. See—they all want you to come out. Every last one of them. Please come out."

"Oh, I like it in jail," said Snooks. "It gives me time for meditation. Well, good-by, folks, I'll be going back."

His aunt grasped him firmly by the arm and wailed. So did Nan.

"But, Snooksy," begged Mrs. Turner, "don't you know they'll send me to the penitentiary if you go back to that old jail?"

"Yes, but don't you care, Auntie. They say the penitentiary is nicer than the jail. Better doors. Nobody can break in and steal things from you."

"Snooks Turner!" said his aunt. "You know as well as I do that Mr. Mullen will forgive and forget, if you will. Would you rather see me go to prison—suffer?"

"No, of course not, Auntie," said Snooks, laughing. "But you see, I've hired Detective Gubb to work on this case, and if there's no case, it will not be fair to him. He's all worked up about it. He's so eager to be at it that he has almost come down from the top of that

ladder. In another day or two he would come all the way down, and then there's no telling what would happen. No, I'm a newspaper man. I want Philo Gubb to discover something we don't know anything about."

"I might start in trailing and shadowing somebody that hasn't anything to do with this case," suggested Philo Gubb. "That wouldn't discommode none of you folks, and I'd sort of feel as if I was giving you your money's worth. Somebody has been writin' on the front of the Methodist Church with black chalk. I might try to detect who done that."

"But that would be a very difficult job," said Snooks.

"It would be some hard," admitted Philo Gubb.

"Then you ought to have more money," said Snooks. "Aunt Martha ought to contribute to the fund. If Aunt Martha contributes to the fund, I'll be good. I'll come out of jail."

Aunt Martha opened her shopping

bag, and fumbled in it with her old fingers. Philo Gubb took from his pocket the bills he had been given during the morning. He counted them. He had exactly one hundred and twenty dollars, just enough to save his brother's store from the mortgager.

"How much should I give you, Mr. Gubb?" asked Aunt Martha tremulously, and Philo Gubb stared thoughtfully at the ceiling for a few minutes. When he spoke, his words were cryptic to all those in the room.

"Well, ma'am," he said, "I guess ten cents will be about enough. I've got a postage stamp myself."

"Aint detectives wonderful?" whispered Nan, clinging to Snooks' arm. "You can't ever tell what they really mean."

Nobody seemed to care what Philo Gubb meant, but a week later Snooks stopped him on the street and asked him why he had asked for ten cents.

"For to register a letter," said Philo Gubb.

PHILO GUBB AND THE CHICKEN

PHILO GUBB, FORTIFIED BY HIS TWELVE-LESSON COURSE IN THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL OF DETECTING, TRAILS A CHICKEN THIEF IN THE NEXT OF MR. BUTLER'S STORIES. AND HE RUNS AFOUL OF SOME WONDERFUL ADVENTURES. DON'T MISS THE STORY IN—

THE SEPTEMBER RED BOOK
THE ALL-STAR MAGAZINE



Della's counter was a club, with a waiting list every noon

The HAIR and the TORTOISE

By Henry P. Dowst

Author of "Tragedy à la Carte."

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

LET us begin with the hair. You have seen old-fashioned, home-made molasses candy after it has been pulled and pulled and pulled? You have seen the great ropes of shiny braid on a full-dress military uniform? You have seen the color of new gold in the plating-shop, before going on the burnisher?

Della's hair looked like all those things. Not that they are just alike; but Della's hair didn't always look the same. It depended on the light, or the way she did it up, or something. And it was the grandest hair ever, no matter how she fixed it. It clustered and curled and waved and crinkled and tendriled

—did all the things that the most approved hair of fiction ever does, and then some.

But it was not fictitious hair; it grew, every fine-spun thread, right out of Della's head, and coiled about her face and ears and neck and piled itself in glorious shimmering mountains, or wound its thick, nested braids as Della's fancy (assisted by the daily beauty-hint pictures) listed, without the aid or support of rats, puffs or other alien upholstery. Della had lots of hair.

Nor was it necessary for Della to treat it, or touch it up, or in any way paint the lily or gild the refined gold of its splendor. It was regular hair, abun-

dant, natural, and exclusively the property of Miss Della Mahoney.

Dan Gallagher saw Della's hair one noontime from the street as he walked past Wadsworth's lunch-room, where Della "did counter work." He stopped, turned, entered, approached Della's counter and ordered a sandwich as soon as he could get a stool. He had to wait his turn, for other men, too numerous to be seated all at once, were ahead of him. There were vacant stools at some of the other counters, but not at Della's. Della's counter was a club with a waiting list every noon. You invited yourself to join, and all the previous members would have blackballed you if they could, but if Della smiled at you, when you said "piece o' pie and a glass o' milk," at about your sixth or eighth visit, you were initiated. Unlike most clubs, its waiting list was made up new each day, and the old members took their turns with the neophytes.

The counters at Wadsworth's were U-shaped affairs, with folding stools around them; they looped out from the wall, and thus on either side you found one stool in a corner, and it was one of these corner stools that Dan Gallagher liked. He got around as early as he could, and as often as possible avoided going on the waiting list. Thus he could covertly watch Della as he ate his luncheon; that was what he came for. Usually he could not have shut his eyes and told you what he was eating.

Wadsworth's wasn't an ordinary lunch-room; the prices were high and the portions genteelly small. You paid five cents extra for two slices of buttered bread or a roll imported from Philadelphia. Bankers and brokers and lawyers and city hall *attachés* and the rest of prosperous down-town ate lunch at Wadsworth's. And politicians, my, yes; governors were made over Wadsworth's coffee, and at Wadsworth's counters, senators had their dooms sealed in cup-custard.

Dan Gallagher knew well enough that he couldn't afford to eat regularly at Wadsworth's; the Café des Enfants was nearer his financial measure. But there was Della, daily surrounded by a

swarm of admirers, and Dan wasn't the only mother's son who trifled with escalated oysters and shrimp salads on a "beef-and" income. The lunch hour at Della's counter was like the salon of Madame de—de—(you know, the one in the tooth powder ad.), only a good deal more interesting. Della inspired, encouraged and abetted an exchange of banter. There were sallies and salad, persiflage and pastry, badinage and berries. Della gave you coquetties with your croquettes, and with your roll a Roland for your Oliver. She was some kiddier, and woe betide the wretch who went ill-armed of wit into the lists with Della, for he surely rode to a fall, from which, like Humpty Dumpty, he would hardly rise.

So Dan Gallagher liked to go early and see the fun. Far be it from Dan to join in; a more self-distrustful creature never lived. He ate and looked and listened until he had to yield his place to one who, standing at his elbow and unseen, he yet felt must be watching eagerly for him to take his last forkful of pie, his last swallow of milk, in eager anticipation of succeeding him on the stool he occupied. Among the frequenters of Della's counter were several smooth individuals, well known to diners-out, glib, agile-thinking, adroit. These delighted to cross verbal swords with the girl. One-sidedly rendered, sixty seconds of Della's busy-hour conversation ran about like this:

"Good morning, Mr. Sutpen. Thank you, that's awfully nice. Tomato soup and a roll? No, I haven't seen 'Bunty.' How'd you like it? I'll change your order to Scotch broth. Oh, Mr. Green, I gave you a nickel too much; no, you can't keep it—this is a no-tip restaurant. Good morning, Mr. Saunders. What? In the subway? Yesterday? I'd have bowed, if I'd seen you. I'm not a bit fussy. Sliced or chopped? Mustard? Sixty cents, please. Thank you. Oh, a 'buffalo' nickel! To remember you by? Thanks, I'll think of you every time I see the Indian. No, Mr. Loud, we don't serve 'em poached between eleven and two. Did you really, Mr. Carbury? In 'The Outbreak?' I'll read it—isn't it a



To Dan, the queer part of it was that Della seemed to like the "human rainbow"

privilege to know a regular author! You want it rare, don't you, Mr. Graham? Well, I can't say I like everything that Robert W.—" (in the tube): "Billy, make that lamb stew a chicken pie and—yes, Mr. Tilford, he's a sleight-of-hand performer. Change, Mr. Brewster. Weak tea, Mr. Chase? Oh, I'm sorry you have a headache; does it go all the way back? Sixty-five. Yes, I'm going to church Sunday. I'm going to have a class of married men; subject, 'First Steps for Little Feet.' Wont you join us, Mr. Bellamy? So sorry. Hot or cold, Mr. Ferguson?"

This was nuts for Dan Gallagher, yet for a thousand dollars he wouldn't have opened his head except to absorb nourishment, or ask the amount of his check. He had seen the brash ones come and go, and believed in the accuracy of the adage, "He who will neither fight nor run in others' mishaps, may find fun."

You will see, therefore, that there was something besides hair to Miss Della Mahoney's head.

"It isn't what's on the outside that gets me," mused Dan. "It's the inside thing—the gray matter, the noodle. Gee, she's a peach! But the man that marries her—where'll he fit? I dunno, now, I dunno. Gosh, though, she's a peach!"

But Della wasn't a peach at that. Her complexion was all that any peach could ask, but her features—let us not dwell on them. Let us rest our case right where we are. Far be it from us to search out alibis for offending eyes, noses or mouths. If, when you saw Miss Mahoney, you instinctively felt that there was something irregular about her, it was, in the light of that hair, and the brilliancy of that wit, a relief to find that the irregularity confined itself to such unimportant considerations as features. You were satisfied; so was Dan—more than satisfied. He was daffy!

Recognizing Della's innate ability to take care of herself, Dan Gallagher was slow to resent the familiarities of her patrons. He knew that she was the best drawing card Wadsworth's had, and that she was liberally paid. In fact, he had heard that her salary was eighteen dollars a week—a figure which hard pressed the contents of his own Saturday envelope. She could afford to be pert and independent, to snare or snub as she chose. That was one of the things that made her attractive to the customers of Wadsworth's. With her yellow hair, her bright, snapping eyes, and ready laugh, she simply had 'em all going; they regarded Della as considerable chicken.

But there was one of the crowd who grated on Dan. When you estimated Charlie Harris' clothes, you became aware that the Lilies of the field and the Roses (to say nothing of the Mauds, Claras and Sadies) of the factories toiled and spun to some purpose to have arrayed one of these—or those. Solomon in all his glory never dreamed of such patterns—the fabled mines of Ophir—or was it Gopher, thought Dan—never produced the rolled gold of those scarfpins, the jewels of those cuff-links. His

ties and his socks left nothing of the well-known solar spectrum but a dull gray haze.

To Dan, the queer part of it was that Della seemed to like the "human rainbow," as Dan mentally tagged him. She stood for an inexpensive line of conversation from Harris that would have brought down upon any other of her customers the killing thrust of her irony. Dan longed for this to happen, but Della withheld her scorn. Finally Dan decided there was some reason more than superficial; there was a confidence between the two, which had a sort of family quality and made poor Dan writhe. He began to hate this man who addressed Della with so much assurance, and whenever his lunch hour fell with that of Harris, he spent it miserably.

With all his modesty, Dan knew that he was the better man of the two anyway you looked at it. He simply wasn't there with the glib, ready tongue, with the cheek and effrontery and bottomless store of gab.

Della's other patrons seemed to know Harris and to like him after a tolerant fashion. They exchanged front names with him readily, laughed at his marked-down brand of wit, poked fun at his clothes and, so it was said, bought his bonds in office hours. He represented a reliable house, commanded a line of trade, and made substantial commissions. Dan had no trouble in finding that out, since he was himself a clerk, not without prospects of advancement, in a banking concern of good standing.

Gallagher had once, under the spur of a couple of Martinis (dry, not too much bitters, thank you), pitted himself against the habitual players in an "open game" of pool at a down-town billiard parlor. It cost him fifteen seventy-five in money and a thousand dollars in self-respect to join the Never-Again Club and he was still a member in good standing. This game of give-and-take at Wadsworth's was a fowl hatched out of a like egg, and Dan knew enough to sit on the spectators' bench with a tightly buttoned mouth, though sometimes the "right answer" clamored for release. Most often was

he prompted to slip one over on Charlie Harris, whose wit, bungling and boisterous, left many an opening for the verbal "haymaker" at Dan's tongue's end—no, it never got that far, it stuck in his throat. If he could only get that guy just once! Aw, what was the use? Harris had everything—clothes, money, acquaintance and gall. Dan wore a dark gray sack suit, a made-up tie and a collar half a size too big for him; and he didn't know that in spite of it all he was a mighty fine-looking chap.

Dan conceded that the race was for the swift, the victory for the fleet—when the fleet was composed of the battleships *Nerve*, and *Assurance*, and *Good-clothes* and *Ready-money*.

Then came Opportunity to Dan's

door. And Dan, mistaking her for her twin sister, Chivalry, let her in, but neglected to close the door, and— But let us to our Welsh rarebit again.

Dan Gallagher, lonely and boarding-house weary, went abroad once in a while in that district where the artificial lights occur in clusters, symbolizing sociability and Blue Seal. This was not often, for lunching at Wadsworth's prohibited much other dissipation. Still, beer at ten cents a glass need not inevitably subvert morals or demoralize bank-account prospects.

So Dan occasionally sought the Hotel



Harris called the waiter glibly by name.



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Bluebird, Rexby's, or the Café des Pigeons Rouges, haunts of the "sixty-cents with," the semi-respectable, the demi-tasse, and other fractional expressions of metropolitan existence. There would be an orchestra, a vast rattling of plates and scurrying of waiters, appetizing smells, wine, women and solos by a near-but-not-quite Caruso imported from Rome, Gee Ay.

One Saturday night Dan found a quiet corner in the Bluebird restaurant, and with fifty-nine cents' worth of food and a pint of "our special vintage" under his vest, looked out contentedly upon the chattering crowd. A "party of two" vacated a table some yards away from him, and into the seats thus freed slipped two new-comers. Dan was not the only person to notice them, for men turned to admire and women to stare. They were Charlie Harris and Della Mahoney.

* The minute you saw Harris you realized that checks were being much worn—much checks. With him, fashion didn't dictate, it tyrannized. It screamed its orders raucously. Only terms of sound can describe Harris' costume—it was distinctly crescendo, from his patent leather shoes with pearl tops to his tie, which executed a staccato effect in purple and orange. People made remarks about Harris' clothes—that was why he wore them.

Della looked about the same as usual to Dan Gallagher, only that her marvelous hair shimmered in the bright lights more bewilderingly than ever; and that, too, in spite of the fact that her hat hid most of it. He thought her face like a delicate pink dawn in a rich filigree frame. Dan didn't try to discriminate between dawn and sunset merely on account of the time of day. He was like the young lady who said she enjoyed the robin's matin song best just at twilight.

There was, however, something mighty disturbing in seeing Della in the Café Bluebird, and with Charlie Harris. He hated Harris, anyhow, and considered him no proper escort for the girl, even at a prayer-meeting. Harris had no business to bring her here; that was sure. And Della seemed to enjoy it,

which made it worse. She looked about at the variegated throng with an interested curiosity, sipped her sauterne, and made laughing comments to Harris, who was immensely tickled at the attention attracted by himself and his companion. When he spoke to the waiter, Dan could hear everything he said. Harris called the waiter glibly by name, and displayed an easy acquaintance with his surroundings. Dan would have liked to punch him.

Neither Della nor her escort noticed Gallagher, however, and that suited Dan very well. He decided that he would slip away as soon as he could, hoping not to be seen. But things turned out contrary-wise.

A party of four men sat lounging and smoking at a near-by table, where they had dined neither well nor wisely. They were young and crude and unimproved by what they had been drinking and continued to order and drink. Harris and his clothes excited emotions in their souls—the emotions of contempt and ridicule and insolence; and Della, with her piquant, gold-framed face attracted their uncouth regard. They began to "kid" Harris, at first good-humoredly; and he, with equal good-nature, not altogether displeased at their attention—stupidly thinking it a tribute to his personality—replied fatuously and in kind.

And then one of them let fall a remark that changed the pink sun-rise to a blazing, deep-red sunset effect. Dan heard the remark, and started from his chair as if it were a keg of gun-powder into which a match had been dropped. But before he could reach Harris' table that young man got into action. Be it said to the credit of his chivalry, if not to that of his discretion, Harris landed upon the offender much in the same manner as that in which a tormented cat lands on a teasing dog—with all four feet, so to speak.

Dan Gallagher, though he had learned to scrap in the back lots of the South End, swerved and skirted the milling knot of combatants. All three friends of the attacked young man were assisting him to repel Harris' assault. The fight could wait. Dan seized Miss



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"There's a Reason" for POSTUM

Mahoney by one arm—ah, thrilling contact, experienced for the first time—and yanked her bodily and forcibly out of the room, through a door and into the open air of the street. A taxi stood at the curb.

"In here, quick," he urged, and thrust the confused, almost hysterical Della through the open door. "This is no place for you. Never mind Harris, now, sure, — I'll look after him."

Then to the chauffeur:

"Here, you, take this young lady—no, no, nix on that stuff! I don't care who you're waitin' for—take this lady to—to—to the Young Women's Christian Association, see? And beat it, lively!"

He thrust a two-dollar bill into the man's hand. Then:

"I don't know where you live, Della, but you can get home all right from the Y. W. I'm goin' back and help Harris — good-night!"

He darted into the café as the taxi got underway and whirled off.

But the fight was over. Two or three husky waiters, trained doubtless for just such Kilkenny exigencies, had quelled the riot in its incipency, and Dan saw Har-

"In here, quick," he urged.



Edmund Frederic
1913

Heating for old and young

With another long Winter coming on, there is only one sure way to fill the home with cleanly warmth—with the health-protecting heat that is exactly suited to grandma, baby or athletic youth. Every age is benefited by living within the genial atmosphere of a home, office, shop or school that is evenly warmed by



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early morn until crib-time, and safe all night. IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators are the heat and health guardians of the home.

All IDEAL Boilers are or may be fitted with an IDEAL Sylphon Regulator, which gives perfect automatic control over the draft and check dampers, insuring great fuel economy and uniform heating. Saves running up and down the cellar stairs during quick-changing weather. It is the greatest improvement made in a century for exact control of the volume of heat.

The practical values and every-day economies, conveniences and cleanliness of these heating outfits have been demonstrated in thousands and thousands of notable buildings, homes, stores, schools, churches, hospitals, theaters, etc., in nearly every civilized country, and endorsed by leading health officials, engineers and architects. That is why IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators are so fully guaranteed. Yet they cost no more than ordinary types made without scientific tests of construction and capacity. Accept no substitute.



A No. 2-22-W IDEAL Boiler and 450 sq. ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner \$195, were used to heat this cottage. At this price the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent fitter. This did not include cost of labor, pipe, valves, freight, etc., which are extra, and vary according to climatic and other conditions.

IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators do not corrode, warp nor rust out by action of fire, gases or water—will last scores of years! Their purchase price is a far-sighted investment adding 10% to 15% to rentals, and you get "full money back" if building is sold.

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Showrooms in all large cities

AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

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ris, very much mussed, holding a handkerchief full of ice water to one inflaming eye, while with the other he seemed to be looking for somebody.

Dan checked his first impulse to enlighten Harris, and backed out into the street.

"Let him hunt for her," he growled. "The big four-flusher! The idea of him bringing Della to this place. Gee, I put one over on that fellow at last, though. Well, I got to hand it to him for the way he landed on that guy. I'd 'a' liked to get in there myself just a few. Never mind; I put one over just the same."

He trudged off to his boarding-house filled with satisfying and self-gratulatory musings.

Dan Gallagher did not go to Wadsworth's on Monday to receive the thanks of the rescued Della. He got within a block of the place, stopped, scratched his neck, and hurried up a side street to Fillet's Dairy Lunch. To-morrow'd be time enough.

But that to-morrow kept receding as day after day chased its neighbor across the calendar. Dan just couldn't do it. Once, within a week of the rescue, he managed to get as far as the Wadsworth entrance, and looking through the glass, he glimpsed an aureole, or a coronet or—well, a mop of bright hair, entirely surrounded by brokers. His courage failed him and he fled.

Thus for him, as for many who achieve greatly, heart-ache tagged at the heel of success. If he ever met Della to gain his reward of gratitude, it would be an accident—or she'd have to see him first. He continued to eat at Fillet's Dairy Lunch.

One day he thought he would try Dalrymple's, where they sought to do things as only Wadsworth really could do them. He was tired of Fillet's. As he entered the door he saw, sitting at a counter, a familiar plaid back—Harris'. The owner of the back was allowing the sunshine of his personality to flood the soul of the young woman who presided there—a chubby brunette. Harris never knew that his case was paralleled by that of the man who stepped off the elevator at the tenth floor

just before it crashed to the bottom of the well. But Dan Gallagher knew it. Next day he went back to Fillet's Dairy Lunch.

A couple of months added themselves to Dan's age; they added a couple of years to his appearance, for Dan felt awfully about Della. Then one day at Fillet's, he looked up to give the waitress his order, and—

"Della!"

"Why, Mr. Gallagher," cried the girl. "Of all people! Well, aren't you the big stranger? Say, why didn't you ever come to Wadsworth's any more?"

"I dunno," said Dan.

"Well, of all things—I missed you something terrible. What you going to have? Bowl o' milk and crackers? Just a minute, sir, I'll give you your check. Yes, Miss, your tea's drawing. No, sir, there aren't any artichokes to-day. Try the Plaza-Carleton. I'll be back in a minute, Mr. Gallagher. We're not allowed to talk to customers in the rush hour."

She clattered off over the tiles. Dan sat and looked after her. When she turned to come back, her arms stacked with dishes, he had a good chance to study her face.

"Gee!" he said.

"I s'pose you're wondering about my hair," murmured Della, as she rattled the plates on the marble table, reaching past his shoulder. "Breast of chicken? Tea or coffee? Yes, sir, right away. Well, Mr. Gallagher, I lost it, that's all. Had a fever. Can't you come in some day after two-thirty? I'd like to see you, really I would. No, sir, we only serve fish chowder on Wednesdays and Fridays. Fried haddock? Tea or coffee? Yes, sir."

Dan went back to the office with a face swimming before him, a new face, but strangely familiar. Only it was rather thin, and plain, and pale; and no longer framed in gold, but rimmed with light, soft curls, short, like a boy's, without any luster.

"A fever," he mused. "Poor little kid! And I never went near her."

The next day he deferred his lunch-time until half past two. Della greeted



Symbols of Protection

Ancient Egyptians carved over their doorways and upon their temple walls the symbol of supernatural protection; a winged disk. It typified the light and power of the sun, brought down from on high by the wings of a bird.

Mediæval Europe, in a more practical manner, sought protection behind the solid masonry of castle walls.

In America we have approached the ideal of the Egyptians. Franklin drew electricity from the clouds and Bell harnessed it to the telephone.

Today the telephone is a means of protection more potent than the sun disk fetish and more practical than castle walls.

The Bell System has carried the telephone wires everywhere through-



out the land, so that all the people are bound together for the safety and freedom of each.

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"Why, Mr. Gallagher! Of all people! Aren't you the big stranger!"

him without the constraint of yesterday's rush hour.

"Yes, I was taken sick about a week after that time—that evening at the Bluebird. When I got better I didn't want to go back to Wadsworth's—can you blame me? Isn't it awful? I never realized what a homely girl I am. I started in here yesterday. It's dreadful,

isn't it? I hate to have to wait on women; they're so finicky. And I never had a chance to thank you—"

"Don't," said Dan.

"And Charlie Harris is just crazy to see you."

"I s'pose he'd like to knock my eye

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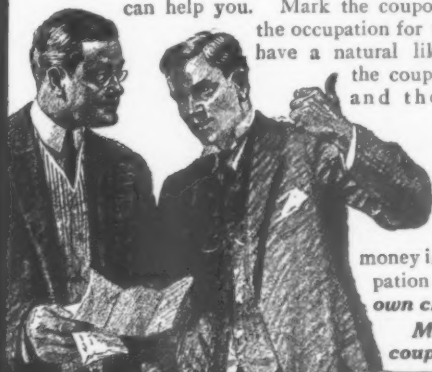
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out, wouldn't he?" grinned Dan.

"Why, no! What an idea! He says you did him the best turn anybody ever did him; he told my sister—"

"Your sister?"

"Sure! Charlie's my sister's husband. I live with 'em. They're awf'ly good to me. They've got the cutest little baby. They want you to come up to the house some evening—they're crazy to meet you. Charlie's a big, good-natured boob, but—"

"Sure," agreed Dan. "I always liked that fellah. Say, Della, where do you live? I dunno but I might be up to-night."

"Thirteen sixty-two Forest. I beg your pardon, sir, that table's closed. You'll have to sit here with this gentleman. Soup? No, sir, the tomato's all out; but the mock turtle is very nice to-day; yes, sir."

Which is perhaps near enough to the Tortoise, after all.



The Badge of Authority

By Earl Hennessy

EVERY night he was visible, hunched up over a small stool in the window of a Broadway automobile showroom, his broad back challenging the casual passer-by with a force at once compelling and mysterious.

Nightly, this back was the subject of much pondering and speculation. It was an enormous bulk, powerful and ox-like—and you instinctively thought, as you stood by the large plate-glass window, of motormen and wrestlers and professional bouncers. It is, of course, a rather difficult feat to judge a person by his back. But in Con O'Donnell's back lay his fame and his fortune and his money-getting ability. It was that which brought him his job. It was that which—in the course of this story—will bring him promotion. And it was that, naturally, in which he took a pardonable pride, though the real reason he sat with his face away from the passing throng was because the light, in that position, better illumined the pages of his Dow & McMaster's "Elementary Arithmetic."

ILLUSTRATED
BY
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It was a little after eight o'clock and the traffic trend was theatre-ward. Broadway was alive: bells clanged; horns tooted; motors "raced," hummed and chugged; and there was in the atmosphere that blurred din and roar of the metropolis. A steady stream of humanity infested the sidewalks, moving almost solidly in one direction. Gayety, fickle and diaphanous, was in the air, to be caught, purchased or trapped at any price; and pleasure-seekers fought, jostled, fumed and perspired in their rush and search for this gayety.

At one corner, perhaps a hundred feet distant from the automobile establishment wherein a restful calm was the dominant note, a modern Horatius, arm outstretched, held traffic with even less effort than did his illustrious prototype of bridge fame many years ago. Finally down came the official arm, the signal for chauffeurs, trolley pilots and intelligent horses to "Go ahead." Even at that moment a small boy slipped out from beneath the checked stream of pedestrianism and was caught in the vortex

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Each ring is cased in dark blue velvet ring box, with white satin lining. Sent prepaid.

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of starting vehicles. There was a shout, a scream, cries—a snarling of wagons, motorcycles, taxis—and there ensued the nucleus of the ever-widening crowd whose chief function is the distraction of the police and the delaying of necessary medical assistance.

Traffic all along the Avenue was suspended. In a large black limousine, drawn up at the curb before the automobile agency of which already slight mention has been made in this chronicle, sat a young woman. Her dull, life-satiated eyes rested fleetingly on the faces of the passing proletariat, as curiosity urged the many forward toward the seat of trouble. Her name was Anita Pruyn, her age nineteen, and her mind was on the futility of human existence and the hopelessness of ever knowing the joy of a prize really coveted. Suddenly her gaze went out and over the heads of the hurrying multitude. Her eyes focused sharply on the back of the primitive student, framed in the massive expanse of show-window, indifferent to the sorrows and tragedies, the joys and gayeties of the street behind him. She stared round-eyed, in fascinated wonder. Whereon, with a gasp, she turned to her mother.

"What a perfect love!" she exclaimed enthusiastically. "What a perfect jewel of a back!"

The mother turned to her daughter with questioning, affrighted eyes.

"Of a back?" she repeated warily.

"Here I have been sitting, wondering what I have been wanting. I knew I wanted something, but I didn't know what it was. Did you ever realize, Mother, how few things I have wanted—and how relatively little joy I have got from the many things that have come to me?"

The mother grew nervous.

"That back was made—just made—to adorn the front seat of my landaulet. See those shoulders—that physique! Why, with that creature on the seat beside Raoul—there wont be anything else on the Avenue. There wont be any parade at all, Mother—there'll just be me!"

A pause. Then: "But, my dear—"

"Quick! We're moving. Get the name or number of that place. Dunham will have to be around the first thing in the morning. Oh, I never knew I could be so happy! I'll have Marcia Parish and Mrs. Van Arsdale and that sloe-eyed, societized Russian actress driving down a side street, crowded to the sidewalk, for class!"

Thus is recorded Con O'Donnell's advent within the confines of private service and his departure from the realms of commercialism. Dunham was Anita Pruyn's personal counsel, who drew a salary of ten thousand dollars yearly for running errands and attending to coupons. It would be immaterial and futile to attempt to estimate the number of millions Anita Pruyn possessed. It was attested by the will of Old Jim Pruyn, her uncle, that twelve million dollars was bequeathed her; it was rumored in the Street that she had fallen heir, by indirect means, to twenty.

Con O'Donnell's vocational transition was due principally to salary. He was receiving sixty-five dollars a month in the automobile agency; he was now to receive one hundred. His hours heretofore were from seven till seven; his hours now began at two P. M. and extended for a like twelve-hour period. His position in the automobile agency could be dignified with strict observance of truth, to no more exalted a sinecure than night watchman; his position in the employ of Anita Pruyn could best be described as Footman Extraordinary.

"But it must be understood, ma'am," said Con O'Donnell in his calm, even tones, "that these mornings of mine are to be mine alone. I want time for rest and recreation. I am a quiet man. That was one of the cinches of the automobile place. I could read and study and be by myself all night long."

"You shall be treated fairly and considerably," returned Anita Pruyn with thumping heart. "No one is treated otherwise in this house. Your duties will necessitate a minimum of mental effort on your part. You shall be instructed in how to act when the machine comes to a stop, but in the main you will just be re-

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Women rival the charms of the Lily, the Rose and all fairest blooms of the garden. To her irresistible sway add the soft, alluring appeal of her sisters, the flowers, breathed so exquisitely in

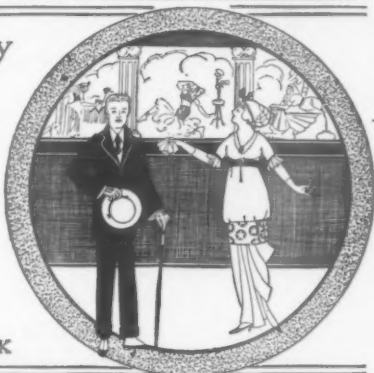
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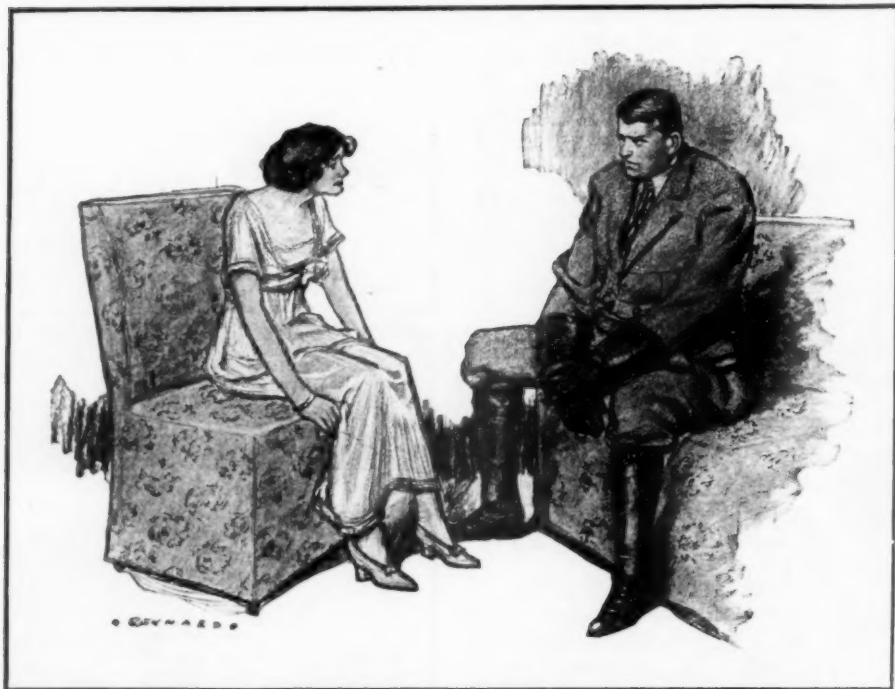


quired to sit implacable and correct, and the more implacable and correct you sit the better I shall like it."

"I could freeze a summer morning's sunrise, ma'am," said Con O'Donnell respectfully. "That's the kind of man I am."

It was more than a success—it was a grand, sweeping triumph that Anita Pruyn achieved in celebrating her return to the regular afternoon's avenue parade.

with her friendship, was one Marcia Parish. Already has mention been made of Marcia. She was a vigorous, athletic young woman and likewise fatherless and possessed of ample walth. And she was something more than some-self-willed and adventurous. She was startling, innovatious, rampant, and she often essayed feats—"stunts" that would have been cause for universal whispering and horror had the person per-



"Your duties will necessitate a minimum of mental effort on your part."

Royal was the term best fitted to be applied to her entourage. On the front seat, magnificent and majestic, sat Con O'Donnell, his massive, mountainous bulk encased in a dark purple livery uniform. Beside him sat the watchful Raoul, calm of eye, and sparse and graceful of movement. On the back seat, in luxurious ease, lolled Anita Pruyn, her cool, impersonal gaze taking in the wave of excitement and admiration, and envy and awe that broke like the wave from a ship's bow on both sides of her.

Among the many select young women whom Anita Pruyn was wont to favor

forming them been of less exclusive caste and circle. And she was just close enough to Anita Pruyn in friendship to be filled, on observance of the other's success, with pangs of wretchedness and mortification. So, that evening, she was in a bad mood when she met her brother, with whom she lived, in the over-large palatial hallway outside her suite of rooms.

"By the way," remarked the young man, stopping short. "Just a moment! Heard Nita Pruyn put one over the fence to-day with a four-base drive along the Avenue. How about it?"

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WANTED—Live wire representative to sell high grade advertising specialty. Fine advertising medium for practically every business. Sales made quickly and easily. Crack-erjack side line for men now on the road. Excellent agent's proposition. If you are a big man and want a proposition just as big as you, write today.

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"Tony," returned the young woman, with chilling distinctness, "you make me weary. You are always telling me you are on the look-out for beef for the University. Along comes a fellow eight feet tall, with shoulders enough to jar the foundation of the Flatiron building—and do you see him? You do not. But Anita Pruyn sees him, grabs him, and dresses him up—and makes the hit of her life with the biggest thing in uniform seen this side of Berlin!"

"Well, what am I—"

"Nothing. You are in no way to blame because he didn't come to you and hand you his measurements on a little card and say 'Look!' But I am to blame because I happened to put some trust in you—and Anita Pruyn gets the big prize and I get Sixth Avenue."

"Well, look here, Marcia, I can go around—"

"There!" said Marcia, with superlative triumph. "That's what I was coming to. You can go around. In only one way can I get back the rightful place in the procession where I belong. You can go around to the Pruyns and get in touch with this monstrous effigy. Offer him fifty dollars more. Offer him charge of the car. Tell him our treatment of servants is unsurpassed. Promise him anything. But do one thing: get next to him in a grand little confidential talk and tell him if he comes to work in our service he will be king—with perquisites, hours, whims and shortcomings of the kingly right duly recognized and appreciated."

Anthony Parish bowed and smiled, for he was a discreet if impetuous young man. He promised his sister an immediate visit to the Pruyn household would be his most pressing engagement in life. The next afternoon he took up his station in a window of an exclusive club overlooking Fifth Avenue, for he was now moderately curious concerning this Brobdingnagian figure of whom he had heard so much and to whom he had no intention of going with any proposition whatsoever.

He was rewarded for his vigil with as imposing a sight as good fortune permits any individual of this universe to witness. Fashion, correct and properly

self-satisfied, was out on parade. Matchless they came, in two lines, seeking the more populous districts, thence returning—limousines, victorias, landaulets, smart traps, bizarre coaches, rakish roadsters, electric broughams: glitter, display, pomp—a kaleidoscope of wealth, a riot of color. He allowed himself the luxury of viewing these people with calm and open disapprobation. He sat slightly tilted back in a chair of generous proportions, his feet on the window-sill, a refreshing beverage handy.

It was late in the afternoon before he espied what he desired. Then came into view Anita Pruyn's crested purple landaulet. On the front seat sat her two inscrutable guardsmen, and all eyes were focused on the commanding bulk and gladiatorial hugeness of the figure on the right. He sat scornful of the gaze of the admiring multitude. There was a certain indefinable disdain on his fresh, red-cheeked visage. There was intelligence in the eyes, breadth in the forehead. Anthony Parish unconsciously slapped his thigh as he leaned eagerly forward and searched rigorously the face of this grave and stupendous footman. Here was not only beef and brawn, hulk and bulk, bone and sinew—but brains and personality!

Excitedly, with nervous irresolution, he watched the machine come to a stop, as a traffic policeman at the corner held up one hand in order to allow cross-town pedestrians to intervene. He saw the monstrous servitor shift his gaze and stare imperturbably at the traffic-squad officer. He saw him fix his eyes in a growing and luminous interest on the efficient officer of the law, and become immune to the passing events of the street about him, his mind transfixed—till suddenly the white-gloved hand was lowered as a signal for release of waiting vehicles. Then did the machine glide forward and disappear from view.

Anthony Parish got to his feet, looked at his watch, moved to the telephone, broke an appointment—and began pacing the long, quiet halls of his club, seeking mental solace preparatory to pursuing a successful campaign.

He met Con O'Donnell at seven-fifteen that evening. They talked in the



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small vestibule off the garage living-quarters, and but a few feet separated from the grim, lordly edifice wherein the Pruyns, mother and daughter, preserved an exclusive existence.

Irresistible ardor was in the young man's voice.

"Listen," he declared with warm earnestness, "the whole thing is but temporary—that's all—so I can keep in touch with you. You're above the job; I know that. You're no museum attraction; you're a figure of All-American possibility. Why, Harvard would give five thousand dollars to-night to have you crawl back in your hole. Sure! I just want you to be around me."

Con O'Donnell puckered his lips in sage and ponderous hesitation.

"Then, as I understand it," he returned in his calm, even tones, "your offer is this: a hundred and fifty dollars a month, feed, and charge of the car. I don't have to learn no foreign language, and if anything sits on the seat beside me he's got to speak English as she is spoken and stop wearing perfume. Hours, you say, are only in the afternoon, so I will have plenty of time for rest and recreation. I am a quiet man. I could read and study and be by myself all day long."

Anthony Parish flashed a startled look.

"Exactly." He was ever polite. "Then—you will take it?"

"Then I will go to the young lady from whom I am now drawing down a pay-envelope. I'll tell her what you say. I'll tell her I'm not much on intellect, but I'm awful common-sense when it comes to a raise of salary. I'll tell her your offer, perhaps, is more than I'm worth. I'll tell her that's up to her to say. But I'll give her to understand this: if she wants to meet it, if she wants to come across with a hundred and fifty—you said a hundred and fifty, didn't you?—a hundred and fifty real, live, government-stamped cases—then here's where I stay and all other deals are off!"

"Off?" There was a polite pause. "I know. But the future! The opportunity—"

"All other deals are off!" repeated Con O'Donnell. "It's up to her to say

about the future. I don't know anything about opportunity. Tell you what you do: You come around to-morrow night and I'll tell you what I know."

Anita Pruyn was furious upon learning of the base, brazen deceit by which outright theft of her prize was so unscrupulously attempted. She fortified herself immediately by granting all possible amnesties in the way of increased remuneration and greater personal privileges. She even inquired as to further prerogatives. She made it plain to her prodigious and preposterous servitor that all possible efforts should be taken toward insuring his utmost physical well-being and comfort. He was but to speak should discontent seize him. His was to be an authority as sweeping as a temperamental lady star's. He could demand—could direct, dismiss or defy. He was Achilles with a brass-plated heel.

And Con O'Donnell was not averse to assuming a mild dictatorship. He entertained a violent dislike toward a person given to the waxing of his mustache. Raoul was transferred to one of the other cars, and a muscular Scot, Burney, was assigned to the place of honor and inaction beside the First Overlord of Wagonry and Fashion. For Con O'Donnell now had full charge of a car. And it was the car of class, of distinction, of eminence unapproached—the purple landaulet. Every afternoon, with the exception now and then of a day of leisure, he guided its royal splendors through the maze of costly equipages of marvelously gowned women that crowded and lined the brilliant and glittering thoroughfare. His was a vogue as unaccountable in its violent rage as a vaudeville topline's.

And in authority of operation and ease of method he was soon unsurpassed among those whose duty it was to guide the comings and goings, the outings and airings, of the mighty. He could stop his car within a hair's breadth; he could penetrate an opening barely the width of his sumptuously mounted chassis. He was ever the pink of consideration in regard to the majesty of the law, and never trespassed on the uplifted hand, or blocked traffic for personal aggran-

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dizement. Indeed, there was a look of awe and humility in the deep-set blue eyes as they searched patiently the pose of autocracy and dominance that occasionally denied for him the right of procedure. He bowed, humbly. He was of the people. And throughout the "finest" he was recognized as a type at once gen-

hated, unrelenting rancor, eternal unforgiveness.

The warm spring days were at hand: the coming of the soft, sunshine-permeated south breezes, the lengthening of the seductive, spell-weaving afternoon twilight. Society perceived the change and the afternoon drive was occasionally

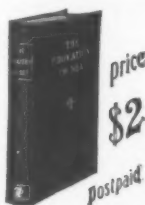


"Why don't you help a fellow out."

erously worthy and befitting of every courtesy.

In the first few days following his disastrous *contretemps*—the Monday following the disastrous Friday—Anthony Parish called up Anita Pruyn and begged the clemency of a two-minutes' interview. Anita Pruyn quietly hung up the receiver and trusted the effect was as she desired—very stagey—and signifying (among other things), undying

discarded in favor of the country spin. Among her many garage possessions, Anita Pruyn numbered a low, piratical-looking, waspish roadster, and this she would take out afternoons of balmy days and afford moments of breathless, delightful terror to torpid rural populaces, by spurts of terrific speed. She generally had a companion, sometimes a bribed friend, sometimes a hired retainer. And being of small stature, frail and *petite*



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in the huge, sloping bucket-seat, she conceived the idea of placing on her right the enormous bulk of her hugely statue-like servitor. She put the question to him with some misgiving.

"The country, ma'am?" he repeated, stolidly reflective. "Makes no difference to me. Just as you say, ma'am—country, city, show places, squirrel paths. You're the judge, ma'am. I'm only bailiff."

"We'll go this afternoon," returned Anita. "Maroon livery."

It was a glorious spring day, such as poets are forgiven for immortalizing. The air held the tang of growing green things and freshened soil and wide, open spaces. Con O'Donnell sat erect and silent, his eyes obliquely glimpsing the city's myriad sights as they darted swiftly through the metropolitan districts, his gaze surreptitiously widening and fastening curiously on open vistas, when the country stretches were reached. Anita Pruyn glanced sharply once or twice at her grim-visaged, impenetrable companion, to note the effect of the novel excursion. A vague, inscrutable, studiously veiled interest in the dim distances was her only reward and satisfaction.

"You sit so erect and uncomfortable," she declared petulantly. "Why don't you relax? Why don't you lean back a little? We're going a long way."

Con O'Donnell kept his eyes straight before him. "I am very comfortable, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am."

"Oh, don't thank me." She shot the machine forward with a jump. "You always remind me of a person who thinks great thoughts or no thoughts at all. What are you always thinking about?"

"Just now, ma'am, I was thinking: Is Phoenix the capital of Arizona or New Mexico, ma'am?"

Anita shot him a swift, searching glance.

"Why, what a ridiculous thought! I guess you think no thoughts at all."

She had been spurting the car forward with little, successive jumps, and now she opened wide the exhaust and the machine fairly leaped over the smooth, hard New England road. She had dropped, with a quick movement, her goggles over her eyes, but the inex-

perience of her tyro mechanic had warned him to take no such precaution. Tears streamed down his cheeks. A barely discernible culvert far down the road forced the young woman to slow up, and she glanced fleetingly to her tear-drenched companion. A laugh, girlish and buoyant, rang out on the peaceful quiet—then the young woman turned her attention to the road. No hint of protest or comment emanated from the bulky impassiveness on her right.

"Still thinking of Arizona?" she inquired gaily.

Con O'Donnell wiped his cheeks with the back of his hand.

"Just now, ma'am, I was wondering: Was the first steam engine run in 1814 or 1841, ma'am?"

Anita Pruyn slowed down and turned and stared deliberately at her disconcerting academician.

"Please don't talk that way," she said. "You make me nervous."

The point of destination generally set for these pastoral excursions was the site of a fashionable, exclusive hunt club, where kindred spirits were most always to be found. Here a short rest could be had, if nothing more refreshing were desired. Also, a tendency to indulge in an exchange of spicy gossip concerning any individual member who chanced not to be present formed an attractive feature of the place. Moreover, Anita possessed a personal fetic: many years ago, during a chase, she had been thrown from her pony and had landed on her feet after turning an aerial somersault; there had never been a place so alluring!

The first person she encountered as she mounted the wide, sweeping veranda-promenade was Anthony Parish. He was with a group of friends, from whom he immediately disengaged himself, and came eagerly forward after a quick, all-encompassing glance at her puffing and snorting turn-out.

"Well—"

She turned from him. "Please—"

He caught her by the arm. "Anita, you've got to hear me. You've got to hear me through. Come in here into one of the parlors. Five minutes is all I ask. If you're not on my side then, if you

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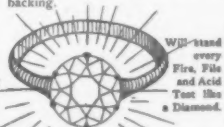
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aren't only with me but helping me through the line—then I'll throw up both hands and retire in disgrace to the side-lines."

"Please—"

"No. Come on." There was no disputing the determined young man. He held her fast by the arm, moved her across the porch and virtually propelled her through the door and into one of the high-ceilinged, massively-fireplaced rooms that opened one on either side of the trophy-festooned hallway. "Listen. Why don't you help a fellow out? Why don't you show the sweet charity and generous spirit ever and indisputably a part of one so big in heart and true in character? You've got a lease, or the inside track, on the biggest thing in football material that ever came over the horizon. We've got to get some real cave-men the next year or two, or we'll never beat Harvard. We had 'em eight or ten years ago, and look at the scores then. These kids we've got now—they're all right for a prep' school, but as for clawing their way through the line— Now, Anita, be reasonable. Let me send this colossal hope to prep'. He'll learn quick, for he's got brains. A year or so of grind, with private tutoring, and he'll be a lion. Sure he will—make all the societies—have 'em eating out of his hand. Now be considerate, be generous. You're not going to stand in the way of this man's education and career, are you?"

Anita smiled—a cool, calculating, congealing smile.

"Of course not. I'm not going to stand in anyone's way. I'm just going to stand in front of little Anita, because she's so easy—"

"You?" Parish snorted. "Why, you get all glory, honor, praise and credit for discovery. Sure you do—you get everything—with a vote of thanks on the side if you like. You want to look at this thing right. I'm not going to ask you for a decision for a week or two, but I want you to think the thing over. And besides, this chap—he isn't going to be such a hit this fall as he was this spring. Novelty wearing off—bet your life! You want to think of that, too. Now take everything into consideration and then, in a week or so, let me know."

Anita was sober and meditative on the return trip. She drove with rational caution and even slowed up once or twice when passing a machine on the road. Only once, yielding to her old weakness, did she plunge her machine forward at breakneck speed, and then only for a short stretch. Slowing down, she glanced inquisitively toward the solemn object of her thoughts and visionings.

His goggle-protected eyes were on the speedometer.

"Speedometer, eh?" She laughed gaily. "What did we touch?"

"Speedometer? Oh! Excuse me, ma'am." He seemed slightly flustered. "I—was just thinking, ma'am."

"Thinking?"


"Wondering what was one-half—perhaps you might know, ma'am—of seven and a third, ma'am?"

Anita turned and faced him, her lips parted as if in the act of framing a reply. She stared a moment and sat irresolute. Then her mouth closed in a firm, hard, thin line, her eyes flashed in pique, and she turned her attention to the road, to which she pointedly and assiduously devoted herself for the rest of the trip home.

Matters, for the next few days, were comparatively quiet. The afternoon drives continued, and though there was a perceptible diminishing in the interest occasioned by the lordly and overwhelming appearance of the gigantic servitor, there still was enough excitement and curiosity manifested to warrant his being retained as a valuable possession. And in the rakish roadster, with Anita herself at the wheel, his stiff, commanding massiveness was still the signal for acclamation. Anita could see no tangible reason why she should, as yet, release claim to his services. When Anthony Parish called up a fortnight later she told him that, for a few weeks longer, the matter would be held in abeyance.

One morning, from out of an azure sky, a message came from her pampered minion, seeking official sanction for the privilege of his taking out a car. Such a request was against all precedent and established order. Anita hesitated only a second, for there was a certain quieting note in the voice: she gave the

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desired assent. However, she immediately called up another part of the garage quarters and got one of her mother's trusted chauffeurs on the wire. She spoke curtly:

"O'Donnell is going to take out one of the cars. Follow him and see what he does. Make certain he doesn't get away from you, for it is very essential—it is very essential—that I know what this Con person is about."

The man murmured assent and hung up the receiver. When he made his report two hours later, Anita was both disturbed and suspicious.

"He just went up somewhere into the Bronx, ma'am, and went up one street and down another. That's all, ma'am—and at each corner he turned, he looked around, ma'am, and I looked around too, but couldn't see anything. That's all, ma'am—probably twenty streets he went up and down—and then turned and came straight home, ma'am. He never stopped once or took in a person."

"He was probably playing tag with you," observed Anita laconically. "We'll have to get some one foolish."

She retained a detective agency and sat back in her snug comfort, awaiting the time when the wiles of her prescient protector should enmesh himself in the net she had quietly set for him. She was not long in waiting. Two days later the request was repeated. Disguised, the detective operatives followed the lone and enigmatic joy-rider, and were even less rewarded for their pains than had been the simple-minded and inexperienced chauffeur-sleuth. They were confident and smiling when they started out—and wondrous and doubtful when they returned. They

were able to detail the streets which Con O'Donnell saw fit to traverse, but as for intent or destination or significance they confessed to a hopeless bewilderment.

Anita now took matters in her own hands. She had confided her trust in others long enough. She felt there was afoot an undercurrent of impending disaster and it was up to her to fathom and frustrate this darksome mystery. Accordingly she engaged a taxicab, of a sporty and violent green, and herself set out in pursuit of her unsuspecting and intrepid explorer—on his third inexplicable and jaunty trip up into the wilds of the Bronx. She saw him turn corners and look around;

she saw him drive at moderate pace and with commendable prudence; she

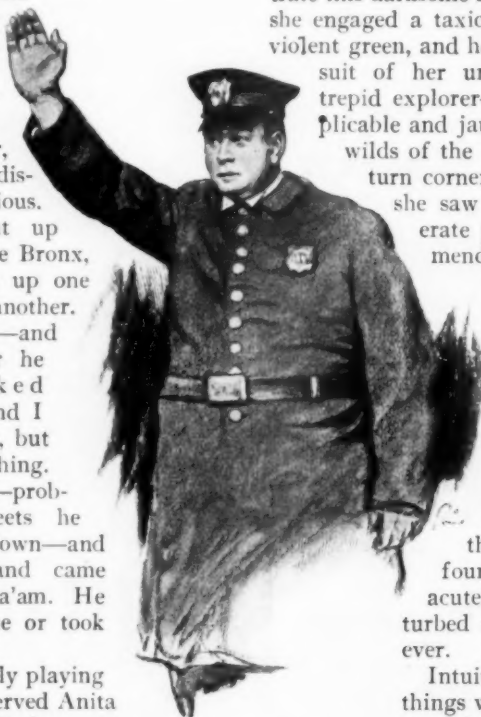
saw him exercise a seemingly studied indifference as to direction or destination. And when she returned, baffled and seasick from the rolling, side-swing motion of

the taxicab, she found herself more acutely alarmed and disturbed and disgusted than ever.

Intuition now told her things were not as serene as they should be. She called up Anthony Parish and confided to him her intention of turning over her

prize acquisition to fame and football. However, she reserved the right of breaking this vital and uplifting good news to her almost uncanny child of fortune herself, and this she promised should be done within a few days. Anthony Parish gurgled in a delirium of joy; his words grew unintelligible, maudlin.

Days passed, and with each day Anita promised herself the change of his future existence should be broached to her massive retainer on the morrow. But delay



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grew infectious and, with the passing of each twenty-four hours, she extracted a secretive joy in being able to withhold from the University the services of this, her mighty and mammoth liegeman, for just that length of time. She felt she was playing a game and steadily stealing a point—on no mean adversary. And Anthony Parish was calling her up almost hourly—and never finding her at home. Finally, however, the coming of the summer heat demanded that decided action should be taken, and she determined a frank, out-and-out interview should be held on the morrow. That afternoon Con O'Donnell called her up and requested an immediate audience.

She received him, after some hesitation, in her dainty, inviolable private reception-room. He entered somewhat uncomfortable and abashed.

"Ma'am," he said, and there was in his voice a notable absence of his calm, even tones, "ma'am, I thought I ought to tell you. Two weeks from to-day I quit."

Anita, white-lipped as from a stinging blow, smiled.

"Quit?"

"You have been more than A No. 1 with me and I thought it no more than right that you should know it as soon as I did. Two weeks ago I took the examinations and to-day I just learned that I passed. I'm going to be a copper."

"A copper? A cop—" Anita gasped. "A policeman!"

"Exactly, ma'am. I've watched 'em all my life. And I tried—three times I tried the examinations and never was able to pass, ma'am, till two weeks ago. Now it's all off."

"But a policeman! Why, a policeman—a policeman doesn't get anything! I'll give you two hundred dollars—"

Con O'Donnell shook his head.

"Listen! I'll do more than that. I'll make you one of the big men of the country. I'll send you to a University second to none in this land of ours, and I'll put you in with a class of fellows you couldn't get in with, with a sixteen-inch gun. I'll put you on the *team*—and you'll go right to the top. You'll be a

news item, a power, a national hero! You'll make business acquaintances, social connections, aristocratic friendships—"

Con O'Donnell shook his head.

"Why, you'll be known all over the country!"

Con O'Donnell sat silent a moment, his eyes contemplating in a paternal indulgence this exquisite and deliciously provincial little patrician who so zealously upheld and exploited and typified the class to which she belonged.

"Ma'am," he said in a kindly, fervent voice, "ever since I can remember I've thought of being a copper. And I've watched 'em all my life—everywhere, every place—on the fire lines, on parade, hitting the pavement, at a pinch. And especially since I've been driving, ma'am, have I watched 'em—watched 'em on the corners. Three years ago I took the examinations, but couldn't remember the streets up in the Bronx. Studied 'em out of a book, but couldn't remember 'em. Then you let me take out one of your machines, ma'am, and I saw 'em on the posts and remembered 'em. Of course, ma'am, the examinations then was a cinch."

"But a policeman! Why, a policeman—is an unknown! Think—think of being known all over the country! Think of being famous! Think of being a national hero—"

"Ma'am," said Con O'Donnell in his grim, inflexible voice, "the policeman on the corner is famous to himself. National heroes, millionaires, senators, society queens—along they come, all of them—in their carriages and turn-outs. And when the policeman on the corner, ma'am—when he holds up his hand and says, 'Halt!' they halt. And when he puts down his hand and says, 'Go!' they go."

"I know! But a policeman! I'll give you two hundred—three hundred—four hundred dollars—"

"Ma'am," said Con O'Donnell in his calm, even tones, "I want to hold up my hand and say, 'Halt!'—and they halt. And I want to put down my hand and say, 'Go!'—and they go."



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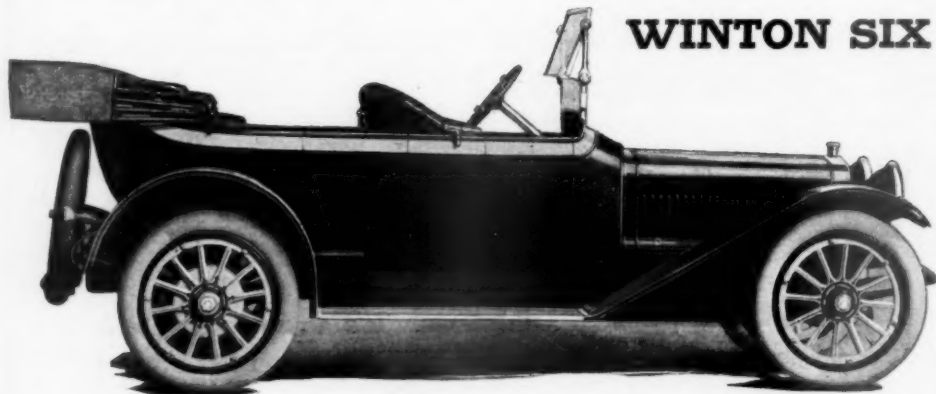
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